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THE HISTORY OF THE
PRIMITIVE CHURCH



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THE HISTORY OF THE PRIMITIVE † CHURCH †

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of Theology of the Institut Catholique, Paris,
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Third Century
Part I*

NIHIL OBSTAT:

REGINALDUS PHILLIPS, S.T.L.
Censor deputatus

IMPRIMATUR

Æ. MORROGH BERNARD
Vic. Gen.

WESTMONASTERII
die 23 Novembris, 1945

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The third book of the History of the Primitive Church deals with the first half of the third century. The principles governing citations from the Scriptures and ecclesiastical writers are the same as for the first two books. Some notes within brackets are added on my own responsibility.

After much thought, it has been decided to adopt a continuous pagination and numbering of the chapters for the four books of this work. A similar system is adopted in the half-volumes of the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique. I have copied this idea, in order to facilitate the use of the comprehensive index to the whole work, which will appear at the end of the fourth book, and also to simplify the many cross-references which occur throughout the text.

I am happy to be able to announce that the reception accorded this English translation of the first books of the monumental Histoire de l'Eglise of Fliche and Martin make it possible to continue with further volumes of this great work. These will appear in due course, but the title History of the Primitive Church will be replaced by more suitable ones.

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THE Gnostic CRISIS AND MONTANISM

§ 1. THE Gnostic CRISIS¹*The Origins of Gnosticism*

We have already, in our study of the apostolic period, met with Gnosticism, a religious movement which was, as we have seen, anterior to Christianity.² Amongst the Eastern races which were formed by the conquest of Alexander into the great Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms and which were thoroughly subjugated two or three centuries later by the Roman invasion, there arose various cults and superstitions which spread throughout the Mediterranean peoples. By way of the near East, the Hellenic world came into contact with Persia, and experienced the attraction of its dualistic theology and its heavenly hierarchies. Already before the Christian era these foreign speculations were fermenting at Alexandria, in Syria, and in all the Hellenic East, and working on the various religions, especially the strongest. They threatened to invade Judaism, and as soon as Christianity appeared they endeavoured to prey upon this also; hence the fight between Simon Magus and St. Peter, and of Bar Jesus against St. Paul. We have traced in the letters of the apostle the ever-growing danger of this contagion. It attacked Christian doctrine, denying the reality of the incarnation of Christ and also the resurrection of the body, out of contempt for the flesh; it also attacked Christian morality, regarding marriage as a corruption, or on the other hand it tolerated, with a proud disdain, all the licentious aberrations of the flesh. After the

¹ Bibliography.—E. de Faye, *Introduction à l'étude du gnosticisme*, Paris, 1903, *Gnostiques et gnosticisme: Étude critique des documents du Gnosticisme chrétien aux II^e et III^e siècles*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1925; W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, Göttingen, 1907; J. P. Steffes, *Das Wesen des Gnostizismus und sein Verhältnis zum katholischen Dogma*, Paderborn, 1922. The chief texts are usefully brought together in W. Woelker, *Quellen zur Geschichte der christlichen Gnosis*, Tübingen, 1932.

[Add to above: article on Gnosticism in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, by J. P. Arendzen; essay on Gnosticism, etc., by Lebreton in *Studies in Comparative Religion* (C.T.S.), Vol. II.—Tr.]

² Cf. *History of the Primitive Church*, by Lebreton-Zeiller, Bk. II, pp. 355-359.

epistles of St. John, this virulent poison was denounced in the letters of St. Ignatius.

The Gnostic Crisis

These were but the anticipations of the great crisis which was to break out in the middle of the second century. The last survivors of the apostolic age felt then that they were faced with an entirely new struggle, and a very painful one. "My God," cried St. Polycarp, "to what times hast Thou preserved me!" The apostolic age had of course had its heretics, but these had worked in the background, remaining concealed in their hiding-places,³ but now that the apostles had disappeared, they worked openly and organised their sects.⁴ Hegesippus rightly attributes their boldness to the disappearance of the apostles and the last survivors of their generation, but other causes helped to give the Gnostic crisis a virulence which it had not previously displayed in the bosom of the Christian Church. For it was at first a development in the Church itself. The Gospel had penetrated into the most cultivated spheres of the Hellenic and Roman worlds; this invasion led to anxiety on the part of the pagan controversialists, and by reaction, to replies from the Christian apologists. On both sides the debate was carried on by thinkers and men of letters. In this world, so new to her, the Church found both her defenders and her opponents; she also found some dangerous disciples who adopted her teaching but only in order to disfigure it. Such was, for instance, Tatian, who as we have seen was at first a disciple of Justin and an apologist like his master, but afterwards became a sectary and

³ Cf. Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, III, xxxii, p. 7: "Until that time (the end of the apostolic age) the Church remained as a pure virgin, and without stain: those who endeavoured to change the sound rule of salutary preaching worked in darkness and as in a secret place. . . ."

⁴ Hegesippus, *ibid.*, cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, VII, xvii, p. 106: "The teaching of Our Lord, during his lifetime, began with Augustus and ended about the middle of the reign of Tiberius; the preaching of the apostles, to the close of the ministry of Paul, ended under Nero. The heresiarchs, on the other hand, began much later, in the time of the king Hadrian (117-138), and lasted until the time of Antoninus the Elder (138-161). Such was Basilides, although he boasts of having had for his master Glaucias, whom they describe as the interpreter of Peter. In the same way they pretend that Valentine heard Theodas, a disciple of Paul. As for Mark, he belonged to the same period, and lived with them as an older man amongst younger ones, and after him Simon was for a short time a disciple of Peter."

the head of a sect. The danger was all the greater because these men very soon found accomplices amongst their fellow members in the Church. The heresiarchs recruited their disciples from amongst the unstable and ambitious whom the truth had satisfied, for a time, but who soon experienced the attractions of the gnosis, and too easily succumbed to them.

The Christian Reaction

These new perils, resulting from the rapid growth of the Church and its penetration into the world of philosophy and letters, led to a serious and painful crisis towards the middle of the second century. We see, so to speak, a shudder running through all the churches, so closely bound to each other. The danger, everywhere felt, led everywhere to the same reaction: episcopal authority asserted itself; the bonds of catholicity were drawn closer; the Roman Church took in hand the defence of all the churches and gave to them an efficacious lead; and all the Christians, grouped around their leaders, remained linked through them to the apostles, the witnesses and delegates of Christ and founders of the churches. It was then that the theology of tradition, elaborated by Irenæus, was set forth by Tertullian in striking formulas. At the same time the discipline of Christian initiation was organised in a definite and strict manner, and the Church imposed upon candidates for baptism a long and severe catechumenate, concealing her mysteries beneath the veil of the Secret. Also the liturgy, hitherto freely improvised according to traditional schemes, was now expressed in formularies drawn up by authority and obligatory upon all. Thus in its various domains the Church organised its life, formulated its prayer and its belief, and codified its laws. But its authority, obeyed with docility, did not stifle the Spirit. Over against the multiplication of sects, the great Church appeared more clearly than ever as the Body of Christ and the Mother of the Christian. "For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace; and the Spirit is the Truth. Hence those who do not belong to her do not receive from the maternal breasts the food of life, they do not drink at the well which springs from the Body of Christ."⁵

⁵ Irenæus, *Adversus hæreses*, III, xxiv, p. 1.

The Historic Sources

One great difficulty in the study of Gnosticism arises from the fact that the writings of the Gnostics, or at any rate of the leaders, have in great part disappeared; and the most definite information we possess is given by the opponents of the heresy. Now, the Fathers of the Church did not aim at handing down information to posterity: their sole aim was to defend the faithful of their day. Accordingly, they brought to light the most vulnerable side of Gnosticism. Again, they attacked by preference those Gnostics who lived and worked in their own time rather than heresiarchs who had already disappeared. Thus, the detailed information given by Irenæus tells us much more about the Valentinians of the end of the second century than about Valentine himself or about Basilides.⁶

Cerinthus

The Gnostics of the end of the apostolic age, Cerinthus, Saturnil and Cerdon, have left in history scarcely any trace other than their names. But Cerinthus had greatly disturbed the churches of Asia Minor, and the vehemence with which St. John opposed him shows that the docetic christology taught by this heresiarch was a great danger for the Christians of Asia.⁷

⁶ These considerations have been set forth very forcibly by E. de Faye (*Gnostiques et Gnosticisme*, 1925, pp. 3-32), but this historian makes the great mistake of rejecting entirely the testimonies of the Catholic controversialists, and of constructing his history only from the Gnostic fragments which we possess. He is obliged to emphasise and extend the lines in order to construct an edifice out of these. Hence through prejudice he is forced only too often to make use of his imagination (cf. *infra*, p. 627, n. 30). More recent historians have not shared this exaggerated mistrust, and the discoveries of important Gnostic texts made in the course of recent years have confirmed the testimony of Irenæus (cf. K. Schmidt, *Pistis Sophia*, 1925, p. xc; J. Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 103). In the short account which we give above, we rely by preference on the texts of the Gnostics themselves, but we also profit by the information furnished by their opponents, especially when we are able to test its accuracy.

⁷ Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, pp. 483 et seq. and 484, n. 1; C. Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern*, pp. 403-452. Schmidt infers (p. 452) that Cerinthus was not a Judaiser, but a Gnostic; his activity had Asia Minor as its sphere; it made a deep impression there, as is attested by three independent witnesses, Irenæus, the Alogi, and the author of the *Epistula Apostolorum*. See in the same sense: Lagrange, *Saint Jean*, pp. lxxii et seq. Cerinthus distinguished between Jesus and the Christ. Christ, one of the higher æons, descended upon Jesus, the son of the Demiurge, and afterwards departed from him to return

These first heretics might be a danger to the Christian communities, but their influence was not very widespread. It does not seem that any of them wrote anything; moreover, the Gnosticism which they displayed was a Judaizing form, or at any rate was called forth by current Jewish speculation which either attracted or else repelled them. With the reign of Hadrian, Gnosticism changed its character: Greek influence became predominant, and its interpreters were no longer ignorant sectaries but writers, philosophers and exegetes who were often not without talent.⁸

Furthermore, this Gnosticism had its centre no longer in some far-off province of Asia Minor, but instead in the great intellectual centres of the Empire, especially at Alexandria, and then at Rome. And those who were carried away by it were no longer recruited only from amongst superstitious folk, dazzled by magic, like the disciples of Simon, but they were more and more, as Origen wrote, "cultivated minds, thirsting to know the doctrines of Christianity."⁹

Basilides

Of these new masters, the first we know is Basilides. He taught in the reign of Hadrian¹⁰ at Alexandria;¹¹ he wrote works which

into the Pleroma. Harnack, who likes to regard the Gnostics as the forerunners of the great theologians, writes on this subject (*Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 271, n. 2): "Thus Cerinthus is the father of the doctrine of the two natures." That is a remark which cannot be taken seriously.

⁸ St. Jerome, who will not be accused of excessive indulgence towards heretics, writes (*In Oseam*, II, x): "No one can construct a heresy unless he has a brilliant talent and gifts of nature, all of which come from God. Such was Valentine and Marcion, who, as we read, were very learned. Such was Bardesanes, whose talent was admired by the philosophers themselves."

⁹ *Contra Celsum*, III, xii: "As the greatness of Christianity appeared not only, as Celsus would have it, to servile minds, but also to many cultivated minds amongst the Greeks, it was inevitable that heresies should arise, not always through rivalries and jealousies, but because a greater number of cultivated minds was eager to understand the teachings of Christianity. Hence it came about that the divine teachings transmitted to all were diversely understood, and so heresies arose which derived their names from those who had admired the principle of the doctrine but who had been led in different directions by various ideas." A little later (*ibid.*, III, xiii) Origen ends by formulating this bold rule: "Paul seems to me to have written admirably that heresies must arise to distinguish those who are proved: for just as in medicine or philosophy, those pass who have studied the different schools . . . so I regard as the wisest Christian one who has carefully studied the heresies attached to Judaism and Christianity."

¹⁰ Clement, *Stromata*, VII, xvii, 106.

¹¹ Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, xxiv, 1.

seem to have been lengthy,¹² though only some fragments remain.¹³ The problem which led to his speculations and those of all the Gnostics who came after him was the origin of evil.¹⁴

"Whence comes evil, and how does it arise?"¹⁵ Like Plato, Basilides tries to solve this fundamental and disturbing problem, and does so by a metaphysical speculation. In a long fragment found in Clement, he considers the sufferings of the martyrs, which were often a scandal in the eyes of the pagans.¹⁶ He defends God's Providence, and affirms that no one suffers who has not deserved to do so. If it is objected that many of the martyrs were innocent, he replies that, even if they had not sinned, at least they had a disposition to sin; if pressed, he takes refuge in metempsychosis, claiming that the martyr, by virtue of a grace which God gives him, expiates the faults of a previous existence. Lastly, if one urges the sufferings of Christ, he affirms with an imperturbable audacity: "If I am pressed, I will say that a man, whosoever you may name, is always a man, whereas God is just. For, as it has been said, no one is free from stain."¹⁷

This speculation which stops at nothing already tells us what Gnosticism will be: faced with the Cross of Christ, Basilides is obstinate; his philosophy is dearer to him and more sacred than his religion. If Jesus suffered, He must have sinned.

This explanation of pain as the fruit of personal sin involves the whole human race in a heavy sentence. Nevertheless, Basilides discerns in this sinful mass an élite, and here again he points to the path which all the Gnostics will follow: one of the great attractions of their doctrine consists in their claim to constitute a separate caste, divided from the rest of humanity. They alone arrive at the truth, not through teaching but by natural intuition. For Basilides, this natural intuition is faith; for the disciples of Valentine, faith is the lot of the simple, and gnosis the privilege of the perfect. But

¹² A long fragment quoted by Clement (*Stromata*, IV, xii, 81) is taken from Book XXIII of the *Exegetica* of Basilides.

¹³ These fragments are found for the most part in Clement; an important fragment is included in *Acta Archelai*, lxvii (cf. below, p. 509).

¹⁴ Epiphanius, *Haereses*, XXIV, vi: "This evil sect had its beginning in the study and the explanation of the origin of evil."

¹⁵ Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, vii: "Unde malum et quare."

¹⁶ Thus at Lyons in 177, after the death of the martyrs, the pagans said: "Where is their God, and what use has been the religion which they preferred to their lives?"

¹⁷ This text is summarised and commented on by E. de Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-44. He regards it as "a striking advance on the ecclesiastical Christianity of the time."

both agree that the higher gifts arise from a difference of nature. Faith, as Clement objects to Basilides, is no longer "the reasonable disposition of a free mind."¹⁸

The Gnostic Emanations

Problems of moral theology were the ones which especially attracted the attention of Clement, but Basilides did not confine his attention to these. Inheriting the pagan gnosis, he transported into Christian theology the system of emanations,¹⁹ and whereas Valentine couples together all these deified abstractions, he presents them in a series of individual progressions, at the summit being a unique principle whom he calls the ungenerated Father. He is followed by the *Nous*, the *Logos*, *Phronesis*, *Sophia*, *Dynamis*, Justice, and Peace.²⁰

All these personified abstractions encumbered in that time the Hellenic and Roman pantheon: here were adored Peace, Concord, Victory, and above all Fortune. The pagans regarded these not only as deified allegories, but as true divinities to which, as to other gods and goddesses, they offered sacrifices, dedicated altars, and consecrated *ex voto* offerings.²¹ The Gnostics, with Basilides at their head, were carried on by this stream: like the pagans, they delighted to honour these abstract divinities, whose personality seemed to them sufficiently certain to justify worship and to be the subject of a legend, but at the same time was sufficiently vague not to offend sensitive minds by an apparently gross anthropomorphism. The avatars of *Sophia* are no more divine than those of the Homeric gods, but they are more distant, and are pictured in a dreamy setting and no longer in a naive and altogether human epic.

It was not only the Roman religion, abstract and colourless, that

¹⁸ *Stromata*, V, i, 3, 2. Cf. *Stromata*, II, iii, 10; IV, xiii, 89. Cf. Liechtenhahn, *Die Offenbarung im Gnosticismus* (Göttingen, 1901), pp. 87, 99; De Faye, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

¹⁹ This point admits of no doubt: the Ogdoad of Basilides is explicitly mentioned by Clement (*Strom.*, IV, xxv, 162, 1). De Faye himself admits this; he adds, as is likely, that this speculation "doubtless formed part of the more secret teaching reserved for the initiated."

²⁰ Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 95 *et seq.*

²¹ On the cultus of abstract divinities at this time, cf. J. Toutain, *Les cultes païens dans l'Empire romain*, Vol. I, pp. 413-437; Wissowa, *Religion der Römer*, pp. 83 *et seq.*, especially pp. 327-338; L. Deubner, art. *Personifikationen*, in Roscher's *Lexikon*, Vol. III, col. 2067-2169; also *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 3-9.

appealed to the imagination of the Gnostics, but above all the pagan gnosis, which arose from the oriental religions and spread through the Hellenic world. Thus, already in the first century of our era, Plutarch, in his *Isis et Osiris*, which claimed to set forth the religion of Zoroaster, described the two great rival deities, "Horomazes, born of pure light, and Areimanios, born of darkness." And below the former, described as the good god, we have six deities created by him, those of Benevolence, Truth, Justice, Wisdom, Riches, and Joy, and again, beneath these six first emanations there are twenty-four others, giving us already the thirty Æons of the Gnostic pleroma.²² The Egyptian religion also leads to the same conception: the primitive Ogdoad is found in the two rival systems of Heliopolis and Hermopolis.²³ Adopted by Basilides, the idea will remain in later Gnostic systems the nucleus of speculations which each writer will endeavour to develop.

Good and Evil

In all these gnoses, the emanations imagined between the supreme God and matter are so many intermediaries which link together these two infinitely distant beings: the supreme God is not contaminated by direct contact with the material world, and yet this world, so lowly and impure, is not entirely separated from the godhead. Once again there arises the troublesome problem: whence arises evil? In a myth in the *Timæus*, Plato had explained the mixture of good and evil here below by the action of secondary deities. This mythical explanation, which long influenced Hellenic thought, also dominated Gnosticism, but, especially in Basilides, the Platonist influence was modified by a dualistic current of thought already manifest in the text of Plutarch mentioned above. Antagonism between good and evil, light and darkness, is at the origin of all things: this struggle which goes on around us and within us is eternal and necessary. This idea, which the Iranian mythology had expressed with such definiteness, will always weigh heavily on Gnosticism, not only on the luxuriant speculations of Basilides, Valentine and their disciples, but also on the feeble and weak theology of Marcion, and beginning with the third century,

²² *Isis et Osiris*, xlvi. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 96 and n. 2.

²³ Cf. Amelineau, *Essai sur le gnosticisme égyptien*, Paris, 1887, p. 294.

on Manichæism and all the sects which issued from it. In point of fact, an anti-Manichæan treatise has conserved a long fragment of Basilides in which this dualism is already manifest.

In his thirteenth book, Basilides, investigating the origin of good and evil, explains it in this way, according to a theory borrowed from the "barbarians": "In the beginning, there existed Light and Darkness. These originated from themselves and were not generated by any other principle. They lived as they pleased and according to their respective natures. But when they came to know each other, Darkness desired Light, and followed after it in order to participate in it. Light, on the contrary, did not desire to participate in Darkness, but only to see it. It saw Darkness as in a mirror, and a reflection of Light fell upon Darkness. Darkness thus seized, not the true Light, but an appearance of Light. That is why the perfect good does not exist in this world, and why there is so little of good. Yet, thanks to this reflection of Light, Darkness has been able to engender an appearance leading to the mixture of light it had conceived. This is the creature which we see."²⁴

Under the discreet guise of this myth, the solution of the problem of evil presented by Basilides is the old Iranian dualism, the fatal antagonism which eternally opposes Light to Darkness, with the deep pessimism which accompanies all these imaginations. There is some good here below, but only a little! It is only a reflection of the Light, seen for an instant in a mirror and then lost for ever. Similarly the followers of Simon said: we can attain only to a partial image of Wisdom; in itself it is beyond our grasp.²⁵

Archontes and his Angels

Pressed by this dualism, Basilides, as Clement points out, goes so far as to make a god of the Devil;²⁶ over against the supreme God, he sets up Archontes, the head of the evil angels and the god of the Jews.²⁷ On the day of the baptism of Jesus, this Archontes was struck by terror when hearing the heavenly voice and wit-

²⁴ This passage is quoted in the *Acta Archelai*, lxxvii. We give a summary of the text. It is given in its entirety in *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 97, n. 2.

²⁵ *Recognitions*, II, xxi: ". . . pro qua (sapientia), inquit, Graeci et barbari confligentes, imaginem quidem ejus aliqua ex parte videre potuerunt, ipsam vero ut est penitus ignorarunt, quippe quae apud illum primum omnium et solum habitaret deum."

²⁶ *Stromata*, IV, xii, 85, 1.

²⁷ Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, xxiv, 4.

nessing the unexpected apparition of the dove, and this fear was to him, in the words of the sacred text, "the beginning of wisdom."²⁸ In all these features the gnosis of Basilides resembles Marcionism: in both we have the same opposition between the supreme God and the god of the Jews, and the same unexpected appearance of the Messiah which terrifies Archontes, and the sudden invasion of the domain of the latter by the supreme God.

Around these ideas Basilides himself or his disciples will attach innumerable fancies: from *Sophia* and *Dynamis* are born the first angels, who constitute the first heaven; then other angels, arising from the first, make the second heaven, and in this way 365 heavens have been made successively. That is why, say the Basilidians, there are 365 days in the year. Similar imaginations are found in the pagan gnosis.²⁹

We have only a fragmentary knowledge of this gnosis of Basilides, but we know enough to discern its religious character. At first sight several Christian features appear which might deceive us. In the Ogdoad we find even a Word, a Wisdom, and a Power. Elsewhere we find a Christ, and read of his baptism and death, his martyrs, and the faith. All these Christian reminiscences are scattered over the surface of the system; they do not affect its depths, in which all remains human and pagan. The supreme God is removed to an inaccessible distance; between him and the world, there is a chain of intermediaries, a fragile chain woven of dreams, which can neither guide our faith nor support our effort nor uphold our prayers. Here below, the miserable material world is illumined only by a fugitive reflection of Light perceived for an instant in a mirror. In this darkness only the Gnostics can see the road to be followed; this discernment on their part is natural, just as the blindness of others is a matter of fate. Pride may be flattered by this privilege, but religion will find therein nothing to uplift it towards God, nor to incline it towards mankind.

Valentine

All these speculations of Basilides were continued and developed by one who was the most influential theologian among the Gnostics

²⁸ Clement, *Stromata*, II, viii, 36, 1; cf. xxviii, 2, and *Excerpta Theodoti*, xvi.

²⁹ E.g. in Plutarch (*De defectu oraculorum*, xxi-xxii), the Egyptian myth of 183 worlds arranged in a triangle round the plain of truth. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, p. 78.

of the second century, Valentine.³⁰ "He came to Rome under Hyginus, flourished under Pius, and remained there until Anicetus";³¹ he therefore spent there some thirty years (136-165). We see already by this fact the decisive influence of the Roman Church. It was this church that the leaders of the sects endeavoured before all to conquer or at least to attack, in the conviction that from thence their action would spread throughout all the churches. Certainly, during the second half of the second century and the first years of the third, the Valentinian sect was, of all the heretical sects, the most numerous and the most powerful.³² It owed its diffusion undoubtedly to the brilliant talent of its master, but also to his insidious cunning. Basilides already distinguished amongst his disciples the profane from the initiated; to the latter he reserved the mysteries of the gnosis. This distinction was stressed by the Valentinians, and the common teaching was clothed in the appearances of orthodox Christianity. Thus one can read through the letter of Ptolemy to Flora³³ without noticing any esoteric Gnosticism. The opponents of the Valentinians, Irenæus and Tertullian,³⁴ denounced this deceitful manner of acting: "When the Valentinians," says Irenæus, "meet with people belonging to the great Church, they attract them by speaking as we speak; they complain that we treat them as excommunicate, although on both sides the doctrines are the same. Then they gradually disturb the faith by their questions, and they make disciples of those who do not resist, and take them apart to expound to them the unspeakable mystery

³⁰ De Faye cannot praise him sufficiently (cf. *Introduction à l'étude du gnosticisme*, 1903, pp. 81-85; *Gnostiques et Gnosticisme*, 1925, pp. 57-74). A poet and a metaphysician, Valentine is also a very profound Christian moralist with a highly speculative mind: "he resembles the apostle Paul . . . with this difference, that the author of the *Colossians* . . . remains fundamentally a Jew; his speculation does not go beyond certain limits, and remains subordinate to the moral and psychological point of view. Applied to him, the term 'intellectualist' would not be fitting. On the contrary, as soon as Valentine begins to speculate, his thought ascends and takes free flight. Nurtured in Hellenism, or rather in Platonism, it brings forth wonderful metaphysical symbols." We are somewhat surprised at the warmth of this panegyric, which is hardly justified by the texts which have come down to us.

³¹ Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, III, iv, 3. Tertullian (*Adversus Valentinianos*, IV) narrates that "Valentine had hoped for the episcopate, for he had great talents and eloquence; another, recommended by martyrdom, was preferred to him; Valentine in indignation broke away from the orthodox Church."

³² This fact is attested by Tertullian (*Adv. Valent.*, I) and by Origen (*In Ezechiel. homiliae*, II, v).

³³ Cf. *infra*, p. 636.

³⁴ Irenæus, *ibid.*, III, xv, 2. Tertullian, *Adv. Valent.*, I.

of their Pleroma." Tertullian adds: "If you ask them quite simply to explain their mysteries to you, they reply, with a grave face, that these are very deep indeed. If you press them further, they enunciate the common faith in equivocal formulae. They do not trust their mysteries, even to their disciples, until they have made certain of them; they have the secret of persuading before instructing." We may add that the Gnostic propaganda was not directed to the pagans, it sought to corrupt the Catholics. Hence one is not surprised by the severity of its opponents nor by the hesitations of historians seeking to reconstitute a teaching which was always shadowy and which took many different forms according to the various sects, and which is known to us only by fragments of Gnostic books or by the attacks of the Catholic controversialists.

The Problem of Evil

Valentine, like Basilides, tried to solve the problem of evil, and he also sought the solution in the hypothesis of a spiritual germ planted in matter:

Valentine says: "Just as in this formation (of man), fear took hold of the angels when they heard him utter higher things than they had expected after his creation, through the One who had placed in him invisibly a germ of higher nature which gave him such boldness; so also among the generations of men in the world, the works of men cause fear in those who have made them, such as statues, images, and all the things which human hands fashion in the name of God. For Adam, formed in the name of the Man who was before him, caused fear of the Man who was before him, as if this former Man were truly present within him, and (the angels) were alarmed and hastened to efface their work."³⁵

We find here once more the mythological elements which Basilides had already utilised: a superior germ was deposited in this material world; the angels, jealous creators of their own work, were alarmed by this higher nature, whose excellence frightened them. We also detect the dualism which dominates Gnosticism: in face of the supreme God, whose intervention is eminently benevolent but unexpected and exceptional, the demiurges, angels, and archontes are secondary forces dominating the material world who are alarmed at the divine element which suddenly appears in

³⁵ *Stromata*, II, viii, 36, 2-4.

it. Lastly, we recognise in this fragment the myth of the Primal Man, the prototype of Adam himself and of the whole human race. This legend, oriental in origin and widespread in Judaism, will reappear in later Gnosticism and especially in Manichæism.³⁶

Death and Life

The material world thus contains some image of the divine world, but an imperfect and distant one: "Just as the image is inferior to the distant face," says Valentine, "so also the world is inferior to the living Æon. What was then the cause of the image? The majesty of the face which gave the painter the model, in order to be honoured with its name." In the élite, this image knows itself and the germ lives; this redeemed race has to fight against death, which comes not from God but from the Demiurge; it triumphs over death by making it die within them and by them:

Valentine, in a homily, says textually: From the beginning, you are immortal and sons of eternal life, and you have willed to share in death in order that you may spend and exhaust it, and that death may die in you and by you. For when you break up the world and are not yourselves broken up, you are masters of creation and of the whole corruption. . . .³⁷

St. Paul likewise had spoken about this struggle between death and life in the Christian, and he had similarly pointed to the end at which all should aim, the absorption of death by life. But in spite of the similarity of expression, the idea is quite different. For St. Paul, the life which is to triumph over death is the life of Christ implanted in the Christian at baptism, which gradually overcomes death within him. But for Valentine it is a higher germ, deposited in the elect at the moment of his creation and overcoming death by its natural power. The Apostle speaks to us of a redemption, but Gnosticism is a cosmology.

From this dualism, always despising matter, there arose also the docetic Christology taught by Valentine. In his letter to Agathopous, Valentine wrote: "Having supported all things, Jesus was con-

³⁶ On this speculation in Judaism, see Bousset-Gressmann, *Die Religion des Judentums*, Tübingen, 1926, pp. 352 *et seq.*, on its oriental origin cf. *ibid.*, p. 489.

³⁷ *Strom.*, IV, xiii, 89-90. This text and the preceding one are commented on by Clement in this chapter. Cf. Preuschen, *op. cit.*, pp. 399-400; De Faye, *Gnostiques et Gnosticisme*, p. 60.

tinence; he assured divinity for himself; he ate and drank in a manner which was peculiar to him, without expelling his food; continence was so strong in him that food was not corrupted in him, because there was not in him any principle of corruption." ³⁸

The Pleroma

All this teaching constituted in Valentine's theology only the common doctrine set forth to all disciples; ³⁹ but in the background there lay hidden a revelation reserved for the initiates. As in Basilides so also here, this esoteric teaching concerned chiefly the Pleroma, that is the divine world constituted by the Æons. In a long Valentinian fragment quoted by St. Epiphanius, ⁴⁰ the exposition of these mysteries begins thus:

³⁸ *Strom.*, III, vii, 59. It must be admitted that Clement does not reject this strange theory, but contents himself with the remark: "We therefore embrace continence through love of the Lord, and for its own beauty." Elsewhere he himself develops similar ideas (VI, ix, 71): "He ate, not in order to maintain his body, which was maintained by a holy power, but in order not to arouse suspicions in those who were with him." The author of the *Acta Johannis* will go farther still.

³⁹ The theory of the passions is presented in the same way. Clement (*Strom.*, II, xx, 112-114) recalls in this connection the ideas of Basilides, Isidore and Valentine. According to Basilides, the passions are forces from without which graft themselves on to the soul and cause in it the animal instincts of the wolf, the monkey, the lion, and the goat. In this conception, as Clement remarks, man is, as it were, a Trojan horse, carrying within himself a whole army of different spirits. Isidore modifies this theory. He fears that it could be invoked to excuse all crimes. It would be said: "I was forced so to act." So, like the Pythagoreans, he takes refuge in the theory of the two souls. "As to Valentine, he explained himself thus in a letter: Only one is good, He who gives force in manifesting himself by his Son, and it is by him alone that the heart can be pure and every evil spirit be expelled from it. For the spirits which inhabit man in great number do not allow him to purify himself, but each carries on his work by corrupting him with evil desires. The heart seems to me to be regarded somewhat as a caravansery: it is opened and excavated and often filled with dung; those who pass by conduct themselves ill and do not care, for it is not their own house. That is how the heart is treated, unless it be watched. It is not the object of Providence; it is impure, and serves as a lodging for many demons. But when the Father, who is good, looks upon it, it is sanctified, shines with light, and so the possessor of this heart is happy, for he will see God." Cf. Preuschen, *op. cit.*, p. 401, Schwartz, *Hermes*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 96. This idea was subsequently developed by the Valentinians: *Philosophumena*, VI, xxxiv. Thus, according to Valentine, if the heart is invaded in this way, it is because Providence does not watch over it. Clement continues: "Why, then, was not this soul from the beginning the object of Providence? Let them tell us this." He goes on to show that salvation comes, not from a natural necessity, but from the conversion of the soul which is obedient to God.

⁴⁰ Epiphanius, *Haer.*, XXXI, v-vi. Harnack (*Geschichte der Literatur*, Vol. I, p. 178) regards this text as an authentic fragment of Valentine. Preuschen (*op.*

I come to tell you about unnameable, ineffable, and supercelestial mysteries, which can be comprehended neither by the Powers, nor the Dominations, nor the subordinate Forces, nor by any (creature arising from) mixture, but which are revealed only to the Thought of the Immutable.⁴¹

Theogony

This mysterious theogony is related to that of Basilides, but differs from it mainly in two features. The divine life propagates itself within the Pleroma no longer by individual emissions but in couples. Moreover, besides the group of the eight first Æons we have now a second group formed of ten Æons, then a third formed of twelve. Thus the Pleroma consists no longer only of the Ogdoad but also of the Decad and the Dodecad;⁴² and we find once again the sacred number of thirty Æons, already set forth in the speculations of the pagan gnosis of Alexandria, as narrated by Plutarch.⁴³

In this dim distance, the secret of which Valentine claims to reveal, the Pleroma is not always perceived in the same manner. Other texts show us at the origin of things, not the couple *Bythos-Sige*, but the Father ungenerated and alone, who at some time willed to engender and to form the primitive couple, *Nous* and *Aletheia*.⁴⁴ But at any rate the various Valentinian texts which have

cit., p. 398) regards it rather as the work of disciples of Valentine. Holl, in his note on Epiphanius (p. 390), sees in it "one of the earliest sources of Valentini-anism." This theogony has been translated and commented on by Dibelius in *Zeitschr. f. N. T. Wissensch.*, Vol. IX, 1908, pp. 329-340. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 105, 110, n. 3; Volker, *Quellen*, p. 60.

⁴¹ It was in fact through immediate revelation by the Logos that Valentine claimed to derive his own knowledge of the divine mysteries: "Valentine affirms that he saw a new-born child; he asked him who he was; the child replied that he was the Logos. Starting with this, Valentine sets forth a myth worthy of tragedy, and undertakes the staging of his whole heresy" (Hippolytus, *Philos.*, VI, xlii, 2). Cf. Liechtenhahn, *Die Offenbarung im Gnosticismus*, p. 24.

⁴² Cf. pseudo-Tertullian, xii: "Valentine says that in the first place there existed *Bythos* and *Sige*; from them proceeded *Nous* and *Aletheia*; from these came *Logos* and *Zoë*, by whom were produced *Anthropos* and *Ecclesia*. From the two last mentioned arose twelve Æons, and from *Logos* and *Zoe* ten more. Thus was formed the trental of Æons which, in the Pleroma, consists of the Ogdoad, the Decad and the Dodecad." On this treatise by pseudo-Tertullian, cf. Harnack, *Chronologie*, Vol. II, pp. 221-223; D'Alès, *Saint Hippolyte*, pp. 75-77.

⁴³ *Isis et Osiris*, xlvii.

⁴⁴ According to an account given in Hippolytus, VI, xxix, 5-xxx, 9. This text is translated and commented on in *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 107-109.

come down to us have the common characteristic of describing the propagation of life in the divine Pleroma as due to the pressure of concupiscence (προυνικία).

In this way the Æons combine, fecundate each other, and give birth to new Æons which, like the former, are androgynous, and, like them, are also filled with desires.⁴⁵ We shall find similar ideas in the Manichæan gnosis, but in the latter we have to deal not with divine Æons but with demons, impure Archontes, male and female, which allow themselves to be seduced by the Light Maiden.⁴⁶ Thus this ambitious gnosis displays the blemish of its origin, and combines indecent imaginations with its metaphysical dreams.⁴⁷

To this theogony is joined a legend of the Fall: the last Æon, *Sophia*, falls, and has to be rescued. In the Valentinian text quoted by Hippolytus, this fall is described in these terms:

The last of the Æons, *Sophia*, contemplating this whole series of emanations, ascended to their origin, the Father. She reflected that the other Æons had engendered by coupling, but that the Father had generated alone. She desired to imitate him, forgetting that she was not, like the Father, ungenerated. But it is only in that which is not generated that all the generating principles are unified; in generated beings, on the other hand, the feminine principle gives the essence and the masculine principle give the form. *Sophia* brought forth therefore only what she was able, a formless and disordered essence, and that is

⁴⁵ In a Valentinian text quoted by Epiphanius (*Haer.*, XXXI, v, 7, cf. *supra*, p. 630, n. 40), the origin of the Dodecad and the Decad is described as follows: "Then, by the will of *Bythos* who contains all, *Anthropos* and *Ecclesia*, recalling the paternal words, came together and brought forth the Dodecad of the male and female desirers. . . . And after that, *Logos* and *Zoë* also formed the fruit of their union; they united together, and their union was the will, and being united they brought forth the Decad of desirers, likewise male and female." Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 110, n. 3.

⁴⁶ Cf. Cumont, *Recherches sur le Manichéisme*, Vol. I, Brussels, 1908, pp. 54 et seq.

⁴⁷ Origen writes as follows in *Contra Celsum*, VI, xxxv: "The Valentinians call 'prounikos' a certain wisdom, because of the actions of their *Sophia*, a symbol of whom they see in the woman with an issue of blood of twelve years' standing. Celsum was deceived thereby—he who mingles completely all the sayings of the Greeks, the barbarians and the heretics. He writes: 'A power which comes from a certain Virgin *Prounikos*.'" In the extensive part attributed by the Valentinians to concupiscence, Bousset sees a trace of the religion of the Great Mother: "This 'Meter' is, in the system of these Gnostics, also at one time the stern, austere goddess, the Mother, who dwells in heaven, and at other times the licentious goddess of love, the great courtesan (*Prunikon*) who, e.g. in the Simonian system, takes the form of the prostitute Helena, in whose worship all kinds of obscene rites were celebrated" (article, *Valentinus*, in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edn., p. 853).

what Moses meant when he said: "The earth was invisible and disordered." The birth of this abortion disturbed the whole Pleroma. All the Æons begged the Father to have pity on Sophia. Then, at the Father's orders, *Nous* and *Aletheia* brought forth Christ and the Holy Spirit, to give to the abortion a distinct form, and to console Sophia and bring to an end her lamentations. Then the Father produced of himself an Æon, *Stauros* (the Cross), or *Horos* (the Limit), to act as a boundary to the Pleroma.⁴⁸

We see in this passage how the Gnostic speculation, with its wholly fantastic development, yet made use of Christian theology and of biblical memories. But all that was only a blind: the account in Genesis of the origin of the earth and the formless chaos has manifestly nothing in common with the story of Sophia or with the birth of her abortion. It is still more evident that the two supernumerary Æons, Christ and the Holy Spirit, are not due to a profound Christian inspiration, although they betray an echo of the Christian doctrine and a desire to combine the Gospel with the gnosis. Jesus appears in turn, but, as in many other Gnostic systems, he is distinct from the Christ. Whereas Christ is a supernumerary Æon produced by the Father alone, Jesus is the common fruit of the thirty Æons of the Pleroma; he joins himself to Sophia, who still remains disturbed by her fall, and purifies her from her passions.⁴⁹

Pistis Sophia

With this theme of the fall of Sophia, other Gnostics will combine many other fantasies. We find them developed especially in *Pistis Sophia*, a work which probably belongs to the end of the third century.⁵⁰ The risen Christ describes his ascension to the apostles.

⁴⁸ Hippolytus, *Philos.*, VI, xxx, 6; xxxi, 6. The passage, too long for complete citation, is summarised above. On this Gnostic conception of *Stauros*, cf. Bousset, *Platons Weltseele und das Kreuz Christi*, in *Zeitschr. für N. T. Wissenschaft.*, Vol. XIV, 1913, pp. 273-285, especially pp. 281 *et seq.* These speculations involve the Platonist theory of the world-soul. Cf. Justin, *Apologia*, I, lx, referring to Plato, *Timaeus*, xxxvi. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 108-109, and n. 1.

⁴⁹ One of these passions, namely fear, becomes a "psychic essence." The Gnostics identify it with the Demiurge, and see in it *Hebdomade*, an intermediary between the Ogdoad, to which belongs Sophia, whence it comes, and the material world, of which it is the Demiurge. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, xxxii, 5-9.

⁵⁰ This work, originally written in Greek, exists now only in a Coptic version. The Coptic text has been edited by C. Schmidt in the collection *Coptica*, edited

Clothed in a vestment of light bearing the names of all the Æons, he passed through the heavens. Beneath the thirteenth Æon, he encountered *Pistis Sophia*, who had fallen from thence. She had aspired to the supreme light, but was punished by the jealousy of her companions, especially of *Authades*, and was cast down into the chaos. She then began to pray to the supreme light; thirteen penances were imposed on her—as many penances as Æons. Jesus tells his disciples of the supplications of *Sophia*, and immediately one of the disciples recognises each of these chants in some one of the psalms or hymns of the Bible. Here again we notice the endeavour of the Gnostics, anxious to connect themselves with the Christian revelation, to interpret the psalms and hymns, and even the *Odes of Solomon* as the lamentations of *Sophia*, and to claim for this exegesis the authority of Jesus Himself. In these prayers there are some pathetic details, but on the whole they are tedious.

Revelation According to the Gnosis

The theogony which we have set forth according to Valentine was claimed to be a revelation. This must be emphasised here. Valentine was not only a metaphysician, but presented himself as a prophet. In this connection we may mention the Valentinian psalm given by Hippolytus.⁵¹ The author of the *Philosophumena* first quotes the well-known passage in the second letter of Plato: "Around the King of all beings are all beings, and he is the end of all, and the cause of all beautiful things. The second is surrounded by the seconds, and the third by the thirds." Justin⁵² and Athenagoras⁵³ offered explanations of this enigma; Valentine presented one in turn: "The King of all is the Father, *Bythos*, Father of all the Æons; the second things are the Æons which are outside the *Horos*; the third things are the whole universe, which is outside the *Horos* and the *Pleroma*." Valentine describes this universe in a few words in a psalm, in which he begins from below and not, as Plato, from above. He writes thus:

by H. O. Lange, Copenhagen, 1925. German translation by C. Schmidt, 2nd edn., Leipzig, 1925; English translation by Mead, London, 1921, and by G. Horner, 1924.

⁵¹ Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, VI, xxxvii, 7.

⁵² *Apol.*, I, viii and lx.

⁵³ Athenagoras, *Legatio pro christianis*, xxiii.

I see all beings suspended from the spirit,
 and I conceive them all as led by the spirit,
 the flesh suspended from the soul,
 the soul led out of the air,
 the air suspended from the ether,
 the fruits germinating from the abyss,
 the child germinating in the maternal womb.

Hippolytus continues: "He understands all this in the following way: The flesh, for them, is matter, which is suspended from the soul, the demiurge. The soul is led out of the air: that is to say, out of the spirit, which is outside the *Pleroma*. The air is led out of the ether, that is, the external *Sophia* is led out of the *Sophia* inside the *Horos* and the whole *Pleroma*. From the abyss fruits germinate: that is the whole generation of *Æons* coming from the Father."⁵⁴

The interpretation given by Hippolytus is a likely one. Whatever may be its meaning, the very existence of the psalm is interesting, confirmed as it is by Tertullian, and by the *Muratorian Fragment*, which mentions some Valentinian psalms.⁵⁵

On this question of religious knowledge and its origin, we have also a testimony of Clement:

Valentine, the head of those who represent (religious revelation) as common to all, says textually in the homily on friends: "Many things that are written in the public Bibles are written in the Church of God, for common things are the words which come from the heart, the law written in the heart; here are the people of the Well-Beloved, loved by Him and loving Him." For he calls "public Bibles" either the Jewish Scriptures, or those of the philosophers, and he regards truth as common to all.⁵⁶

In this way the privileged position of Judaism and Christianity is effaced. Revelation is always the source of religious truth, but revelation is not necessarily something which comes to mankind through the indispensable medium of Christ and the Church. On the contrary, it is immediately granted to certain individuals. The

⁵⁴ On this psalm, cf. D'Alès, *Hippolyte*, p. 97: "Among the productions attributed to the heretics, there is one which no one will venture to regard as invented at will: the Naassenian psalm has an authentic note no less certain than the unintelligible Valentinian psalm." Hippolytus's interpretation is adopted by Liechtenhahn, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁵⁵ Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, xvii; *Muratorianum*, lxxxii.

⁵⁶ *Strom.*, VI, vi, 52, 3-4. Cf. Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, Vol. II, pp. 953 *et seq.*

human grace is divided into three groups, the pneumatical, the psychical, and the hylical.⁵⁷ The last-mentioned are condemned to be the slaves of matter; the second can laboriously achieve their salvation through asceticism; the first-mentioned are the elect, who possess a divine germ deposited in them without the knowledge even of the demiurge and his angels; they are saved through gnosis, which comes from a divine illumination.

This idea of a divine race will dominate all Gnosticism. It presents a real attraction for proud minds, but for the disciples of the Gospel it will constitute one of its most obviously anti-Christian features.

Ptolemy

Of the disciples of Valentine, there are two who are particularly well known, Ptolemy and Heracleon. A study of these is interesting, inasmuch as it puts us in presence of Gnostic exegesis, which the fragments of the great teachers leave in obscurity.

The letter from Ptolemy to Flora is given in its entirety by St. Epiphanius.⁵⁸ Harnack has published it with great care in his *Transactions of the Berlin Academy* (1902), and in his introduction he stresses its interesting character.⁵⁹ It does not expound esoteric teaching, but leaves that in a distant background: it may be revealed to Flora if she shows herself to be worthy. What Ptolemy sets forth in his letter is an interpretation of the Pentateuch. He distinguishes between three different inspirations, and depending upon these sources, three elements of unequal value. Some laws were dictated directly by God, as for instance the Decalogue: these are sacred and immutable so that not one iota may be changed. Others emanated from Moses, as for instance the *lex talionis*; though generally good, these laws are imperfect, and mingled with evil elements. Others, lastly, came from the elders of the Jewish people; particularly the ritual laws concerning sacrifices, the sabbath, fasting, and azymes: these precepts have only a symbolical value. This links up Ptolemy with the exegesis we have met with in the letter of Barnabas, but the former endeavours to justify his distinctions by the teaching of Jesus as set forth in the synoptic

⁵⁷ Cf. De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

⁵⁸ *Haereses*, XXXIII, iii-vii.

⁵⁹ It is given in Migne, P.G., Vol. VII, 1281-1292. Dufourcq has partly translated it in *Irenée*, p. 79 *et seq.* De Faye devotes a few pages to it (*op. cit.*, pp. 103-107).

gospels. Finally, he asks who was the God who partially inspired the Pentateuch: he regards him as, not the supreme God, nor the devil, but the demiurge who is intermediate between these two extreme principles, and is the just God. Here we have the Marcionite thesis.

Of Ptolemy we possess also an interpretation of the Prologue to St. John's Gospel, summarised by Irenæus.⁶⁰ This text is different in character from the letter to Flora. It contains an esoteric teaching: the Valentinian theogony is sought in the Gospel. Ptolemy discovers it there by giving to the theological terms used by St. John the meaning attributed to them by the Gnostics. Some fragments of this long passage will suffice to illustrate the method:

. . . That which was made in him, it says, is life. Here he signifies a syzygy, for he says that all things were made *by* Him, but Life *in* him. Life, therefore, which is in Him, is more closely united to Him than all the beings made by Him, for it is with Him, and it is fruitful by Him. And as he adds: "And the Life was the light of men," he names particularly Man, and signifies with him the Church, to show that by the use of the one word he means the unity of syzygy. For from the Logos and Life are born Man and the Church. . . . Thus, by these words, John clearly teaches, amongst other things, the second Tetrad. But he has also set forth the first Tetrad. For, when speaking of the Saviour, and saying that all that is outside the Pleroma was fashioned by him, he says that he is the fruit of all the Pleroma. . . . And the Logos was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we have seen his glory, glory as that which an only Son (receives) from the Father, full of Grace and Truth. Thus he expressly teaches the first Tetrad, by naming the Father, Grace, the Only-begotten, and Truth. Thus John speaks of the first Ogdoad, the mother of all the Æons: for he has named the Father, Grace, the Only-begotten, Truth, Logos, Life, Man, and the Church.

Thus we see how a few words, scattered in the text of St. John, are artificially collected together, and constructed into the whole Valentinian system—an easy form of exegesis, but a very weak one.

Heracleon

We find the same in Heracleon. Like Ptolemy, he was a disciple of Valentine and belonged to the same generation. He interpreted

⁶⁰ *Adversus haereses*, I, viii, 5. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 112-113. De Fayc, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

the Gospels, and Clement gives a fragment of his on St. Luke.⁶¹ Origen often quotes in his writings on St. John the commentary by Heracleon and discusses it. Though these numerous and lengthy transcriptions do not enable us to reconstitute the lost book completely, they nevertheless enable us to understand and judge its exegetical method.⁶²

The letter from Ptolemy to Flora distinguished three principles, the supreme God, the Devil, and the Demiurge between these two. Heracleon seeks for the same theological scheme in the texts of St. John, and for instance in the story of the Samaritan woman. The supreme God, the Father, is symbolised by God the Spirit whom one must adore in spirit and in truth (fr. 20 *et seq.*); the God of the Jews, adored at Jerusalem, is the Demiurge; the one adored on the mountain of Samaria is the Devil.

The Demiurge plays a great part in this exegesis. John the Baptist humbling himself before Jesus is a symbol of the Demiurge, and the shoe of Christ is the world (fr. 8). The Demiurge again is seen in the ruler of Capharnaum (*John* iv, 46): he is but a ruler for his domain is small and ephemeral; he asks the Lord to heal his son, that is, the material world he has created; his servants are the angels; like him, they believe in the Lord, and this is the meaning of the text: "He believed, and all his household" (fr. 40). Again, the Demiurge is the one who carries out the judgments of Christ (*John* viii, 50; fr. 48), and St Paul refers to him when he says: "He bears not the sword in vain" (*Romans* xiii, 4).

The Devil is, as we have said, represented by the mountain of Samaria (fr. 20). He was the one to whom worship was addressed before the Law, and the Gentiles still honour him to-day; he has passions, but no will (fr. 46), he is entirely false (fr. 47).

Just as there are three supreme principles and three worships, so there exist three races of men: the spirituals, the psychicals, and the materials. The spirituals were formed by the Logos (fr. 2);

⁶¹ *Strom.*, IV, ix, 71-72 (on *Luke* xii, 11 *et seq.*), fragment 50 in Brooke's edition. In this fragment, Heracleon explains how the Christian must confess Christ throughout his life. Clement, after quoting this text, remarks that Heracleon speaks as we do; he criticises him only for not recognising the value of a confession which, although not prepared for in life, is aroused and affirmed in the presence of death. See on the same text the commentary of De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

⁶² The fragments have been collected and edited by A. E. Brooke, *Fragments of Heracleon*, Texts and Studies, 1, 4 (1891). They are studied by De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-102. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 113-116.

they possess a spiritual seed;⁶³ they are consubstantial with God,⁶⁴ their nature is incorruptible (fr. 37). Before the coming of the Saviour they were ignorant, and without true worship; they have been saved by him (fr. 17 and 19). Faith is natural to them (fr. 24); they succour and save the psychicals, they are the "water springing up to life eternal" (fr. 17 and 27). At the last day they will apparently become the brides of the angels of the Lord; this is the wedding feast, symbolised by that at Cana.⁶⁵

The psychicals, symbolised by the Jews (fr. 19), adore the angels (fr. 21). They are very numerous, whereas the spiritual élite are few.⁶⁶ They are involved in matter, but can be saved, though without entering into the Pleroma like the spirituals.⁶⁷ Their symbol is the figure 7, between 6, the symbol of evil, and 8, the symbol of the Ogdoad.⁶⁸ They can by their choice become sons of the Devil; the material ones are so by nature (fr. 46).

These examples, which could be multiplied,⁶⁹ show the exegetical method of the Gnostics. It may be said in their defence that such fantasies were the fashion in those days: the Stoics rediscovered all their physics in the Homeric poems; their exegesis was as free as that of Ptolemy and Heracleon. But the Catholics did not at all regard themselves as authorised to treat the Bible as the Stoics treated Homer. Origen indeed will apply allegory to the interpretation of the Old Testament, and even of the Gospel, but he will do so quite differently from the Gnostics:⁷⁰ the Hexapla shows with

⁶³ Fr. 16; cf. the note referring to *Excerpta Theodoti*, I; *Philos.*, VI, xxxiv; *Strom.*, IV, xiii.

⁶⁴ Fr. 24; cf. n. C, p. 106. We see here the Platonist teaching, rejected by Justin in his *Dialogue*, iv.

⁶⁵ Fr. 12, cf. *Excerpta*, lxiii; Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, vii, 1.

⁶⁶ Fr. 37, cf. *Excerpta*, lvi.

⁶⁷ Fr. 13, 11. Cf. *Excerpta*, lviii.

⁶⁸ Fr. 40; cf. fr. 16: in the 46 years required for the building of the Temple (*John* ii, 20), Heracleon finds a whole mystery: the great King Solomon is a figure of the Saviour; the number 6 signifies matter; 40 is the symbol of the sovereign and transcendent Tetrad, whence proceeds the spiritual seed deposited in matter.

⁶⁹ One could find in the Gnostics refuted by Irenæus, especially in *Adversus haereses*, I, i, 3, numerous traits very similar to those we have noticed in the fragments of Ptolemy and Heracleon. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 116, n. 1.

⁷⁰ It cannot therefore be said with De Faye (*op. cit.*, p. 79): "The method of interpretation practised by Gnosticism is allegory, and from this point of view there is no difference between it and Origen."

what care he set out to establish the true text of the sacred books and their meaning. The allegorical sense which he tries to discover is based upon the literal sense, but usually does not destroy the latter, and the mysteries which allegory thus discovers are Christian mysteries, which the Bible reveals and the official tradition of the Church sets forth. The Gnostics, on the contrary, continued their imaginary constructions in full freedom, often influenced by pagan traditions and only afterwards going to the Bible in order to seek confirmation by artificial contacts which cannot be regarded seriously.

The Gnostic Schools

We have so far considered only the masters of gnosis, but they were not the only ones. From the first, the sect split up into rival schools, each being free to dogmatise as it chose: "The Valentinians," remarked Tertullian, "have taken the same liberties as Valentine, the Marcionites the same as Marcion. they have all in their own way transformed the faith."⁷¹ The Valentinian heresy thus split up into two branches. In the West, a school called by Hippolytus the Italian School,⁷² spread not only in Italy, but also in southern Gaul. To this school belonged Ptolemy and Heraclion, and it is the one usually dealt with by Irenæus.⁷³ The oriental school, to which were attached Axionikos and Bardesanes,⁷⁴ flourished

⁷¹ *De praescr. haeret.* xlii, 8. Cf. Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, xi, 1: "Let us see how inconstant are their views, for there are two or three of them; they do not now agree on the same subject, but contradict each other in words and in things."

⁷² *Philos.*, VI, xxxv, 6.

⁷³ Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, xiii et seq. The doctrine Irenæus sets forth is that of the disciples of Ptolemy: I, *praef.* 2. But he sometimes attacks also the followers of oriental Gnosticism, such as Marcus.

⁷⁴ We do not deal here with Bardesanes, born at Edessa in 154, died in 222. We possess only his *Dialogue on Destiny*, written in Syriac by a disciple named Philip in the last years of the second and the first years of the third centuries. This book, edited by F. Nau (*Le Livre des lois du pays*, Paris, 1899) and in *Patr. Syr.*, I, 2 (1907), does not set forth the Gnostic theses usually attributed by writers on heresies to Bardesanes; it is a discussion concerning free will. The author tries to prove that human acts can arise from three principles, nature, destiny, and will. The author exaggerates the influence of the stars on the human will. Nau grants that he was mistaken on "the influence of the stars, the origin and composition and death of the human body, and finally on the body of Christ," but denies that he was himself a Gnostic in the usual sense of the term (*Patr. Syr.*, II, p. 535). Cf. F. Nau, *Une biographie inédite de Bardesane l'astrologue*, Paris, 1897; A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn, 1922, pp. 12-14. To Bar-

mainly in Egypt and Syria: we find in it also some magi, such as the Marcus attacked by Irenæus. The tricks of this charlatan do not call for a detailed study, but they show to what miserable practices this proud Gnosticism could descend.

§ 2. MARCIONISM¹

Marcion

Marcion, the most formidable opponent of the Church in the second century, belonged to the same generation as the great Gnostics, Basilides and Valentine, but he was older than these.² His talent was not that of a metaphysician nor of a prophet; he in no wise resembled a Valentine or a Montanus. He was a man of action, and a leader who succeeded in forming numerous churches, solidly constructed, and closely linked with one another, and he was able to attract a following of "companions in misery"³ many of whom made confession of the Christian faith even by martyrdom. His Bible was a mutilated one, and his theology feeble and inconsistent. Yet the new sect which he founded with such vehement energy undertook to conquer the world, and presented a fierce resistance to the Church.

His Origin

Marcion was born at Sinope. In that province of Pontus, Christians were numerous, and the churches were well organ-

desanes has sometimes been attributed the *Hymn of the Soul*, but this ascription is not proved. A. A. Bevan (*The Hymn of the Soul*, Cambridge, 1897) regards it as highly probable (p. 6), but most historians have not followed him in this. Felix Haase (*Zur Bardesanischen Gnosis*, 1910) concludes (pp. 89-90) that Bardesanes was certainly a heretic, and was influenced by Gnosticism though not himself a strict Gnostic; his chief sources were astronomy and astrology; he is a witness to the great influence of Greek philosophy; some terms passed from his work into the language of Syrian theology. He has little importance for general history and the history of religions, but great importance for the history of civilisation.

¹ On Marcion, see: A. von Harnack, *Marcion, Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott*, Leipzig, 1924; *Neue Studien zu Marcion*, Leipzig, 1923; A. d'Alès, *Marcion, la réforme chrétienne au II^e siècle*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XIII, 1922, pp. 137-168. Cf. also *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 122-131.

² Clement, *Strom.*, VI, xvii, 106: "Marcion belonged to the same period as Basilides and Valentine, but he was already an old man when they were as yet young."

³ That is what Marcion called his disciples: cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marcion*, IV, ix and xxxvi.

ised.⁴ According to Hippolytus, Marcion's father was a bishop, who excommunicated his son.⁵ The young man had amassed riches in his trade of armourer, left Pontus, and went to Asia Minor. He there opposed St. Polycarp, who regarded him as "the first-born of Satan." When the aged Bishop of Smyrna went to Rome in 154, he profited by his stay and restored to the Church many of the disciples of Valentine and Marcion.⁶

His Defection

Marcion had in fact gone to Rome. He presented himself there as a faithful Christian, as is shown by a written document which the Roman Church kept,⁷ and "in the first ardour of his faith" he gave to the Roman Church 200,000 sesterii.⁸ He apparently kept in the background, working out his doctrine and endeavouring to secure its basis by preparing his *Antitheses* and his version of Scripture.⁹

When this work of elaboration was completed, Marcion appeared before the presbyters, and asked them for an explanation of some Gospel texts which he regarded as particularly significant: "A good tree can bring forth only good fruit" (*Luke* vi, 43); "No man

⁴ Cf. the letter from Pliny to Trajan (Vol. II, p. 315). We recall also what Pliny said about the Christian deaconesses (*ibid.*, p. 404).

⁵ This incident is mentioned in the *Syntagma* of Hippolytus, from whom Epiphanius copies it. The excommunication is said to have been caused by the violation of a virgin. The accusation seems to have been unknown to Tertullian, and accordingly seems hardly likely. But the excommunication may have been pronounced because of some heretical teaching, and possibly that is the "violation" mentioned by Hippolytus. Cf. Harnack, *Marcion*, pp. 23-24.

⁶ Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, III, iii, 4, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xiv, 6. Cf. *ibid.*, 7: "The same Polycarp, to whom Marcion had said: 'Recognise me,' replied 'I recognise the first-born of Satan.'" This meeting may have been in Asia or in Rome. Marcion's stay in Asia is attested by Papias in the prologue *In evang. Johannis*, ed. Wordsworth-White, *Testamentum domini nostri Jesu Christi latine*, Part I, fasc. iv, pp. 490 *et seq.*; Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁷ Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, ii: "eo magis mortuus es, quo magis non es christianus; qui cum fuisses, excidisti, rescindendo quod retro credidisti; sicut et ipse confiteris in quadam epistola, et tui non negant, et nostri probant." Cf. *De praescr. haeret.*, xxx; *Adversus Marcionem*, I, xx; Kattenbusch, *Apost. Symbol.*, II, pp. 86 *et seq.*, pp. 322 *et seq.*; Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁸ *Adv. Marc.*, IV, iv; *De praescr. haeret.* xxx.

⁹ Harnack (*op. cit.*, p. 26) notes that the preparation of the expurgated text of the Bible and of the *Antitheses* must have required reflection and taken time, and as the text which served as a basis for these works is attested more in the West than in the East, we may reasonably infer that the work was done at Rome, during the few years preceding the rupture with the Church (144).

puts new wine into old bottles" (*ibid.*, v, 36). The interpretation given him did not satisfy him; he fell away, and the Roman Church rejected the money he had given, together with the giver.¹⁰

This rupture was the starting point of a new era according to the Marcionites: Christ appeared on earth in the fifteenth year of Tiberius; after 115 years and six and a half months, Marcion founded his church.¹¹ If we date the 15th year of Tiberius as 29, and begin with the commencement of that year, the Marcionite chronology leads to the middle of July 144.

The growth of the new sect was very rapid. About 150 Justin already wrote: "Marcion of Pontus, who is still teaching to-day, professes belief in a God superior to the Creator; with the help of demons he is sowing blasphemy throughout the world." And a little later on: "Many accept his teaching, and mock at us. They cannot prove anything they say, but are as stupid as sheep carried away by a wolf, and are the prey of atheism and of demons."¹² At the beginning of the following century, Tertullian will write: "The teaching of Marcion has filled the whole world."¹³

Opposition Between the Two Testaments

This very rapid success will be better understood if we remember the uneasiness with which some imprudent or badly instructed Christians regarded some parts of the Old Testament, and especially its legislation. The author of the *Letter of Barnabas* wished to regard these laws merely as symbols of spiritual realities: God had never meant to ask the Jews for a temple of stone, nor for the circumcision of the flesh, nor for the sabbath rest.¹⁴ Shortly afterwards,

¹⁰ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, IV, iv.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, I, 19: "Anno XV. Tiberii Christus Jesus de caelo manare dignatus est, spiritus salutaris Marcionis. Salutis + qui ita voluit quoto quidem anno Antonini majoris de Ponto suo exhalaverit aura canicularis, non curavi investigare. De quo tamen constat, Antoninus haereticus est, sub Pio impius. A Tiberio autem constat usque ad Antoninum anni fere CXV et dimidium anni cum dimidio mensis. Tantumdem temporis ponunt inter Christum et Marcionem." Cf. Harnack, *Chronologie*, Vol. I, pp. 297 *et seq.*, 306 *et seq.*; Marcion, p. 18.

¹² *Apol.*, I, xxvi and lviii.

¹³ Tertullian, *Ad. Marc.*, V, xix. The date of Marcion's death is not known to us, but it would seem not to be later than 160 (Harnack, *Marcion*, p. 25). According to Tertullian (*De praescr. haeret.*, xxx) he wished to be reconciled with the Church; he was told to bring back those he had led astray, but died before he was able to do so.

¹⁴ Cf. Bk. II, p. 441.

the same solution will be adopted in the letter from Ptolemy to Flora.¹⁵ But it must have been clear to any unprejudiced mind that this interpretation did violence to the Bible.

Marcion rejected it: no more symbols, only the letter. But he regarded the letter as unworthy of God. The God of the Jews, the Creator, is not the God of Christians, nor the Father of Christ. Such is the fundamental doctrine of Marcionism, and it forms the chief subject of controversy.

To make clear the opposition which he believed to exist between the two Testaments, Marcion composed his book of *Antitheses*. This work, the only one which he wrote,¹⁶ was for his disciples a supreme rule of faith.¹⁷ It consisted essentially of texts of the Old and New Testaments, set against each other in order to bring out the opposition between the two Testaments, and consequently also between their deities. The Catholic doctors were in the habit of constituting collections of biblical texts or "testimonies," and giving these to their disciples to help them to know, defend and spread their faith.¹⁸ Marcion similarly wished to have his collection of testimonies, but to manifest the opposition between the Law and the Gospel, not their agreement.¹⁹

The book is lost, but its detailed refutation by Tertullian and the other controversialists enables us to see how Marcion dealt with the two Testaments.²⁰

Marcion read in *Isaias* (xlv, 7): "I send evils." Now, as Christ

¹⁵ Cf. *supra*, p. 638.

¹⁶ We deal later with his text of the New Testament; this was not a book of his own composition, but a mutilated edition of the Gospel and of St. Paul.

¹⁷ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, xix. "Separatio legis et evangelii proprium et principale opus est Marcionis, nec poterunt negare discipuli ejus, quod in summo instrumento habent, quo denique intantur et indurantur in hanc haeresim. Nam hae sunt Antitheses Marcionis, id est contrariae oppositiones, quae conantur discordiam evangelii cum lege committere, ut ex diversitate sententiarum utriusque instrumenti diversitatem quoque argumententur deorum." We see from this text that for the Marcionites the *Antitheses* were the supreme authority, *summum instrumentum* (cf. the expression *utriusque instrumenti* applied to the two Testaments); they employed it in the baptismal initiation just as the Church uses the Creed. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

¹⁸ The best known of these collections is the book of St. Cyprian, *Testimonia*, but this was not the first.

¹⁹ These texts were not merely translated, but were accompanied by short explanations in which Marcion set forth and defended his ideas. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 72 *et seq.*

²⁰ This work of reconstitution has been carried out very carefully by Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-134; the above-mentioned features are for the most part copied from him.

has told us, a good tree can bring forth only good fruit. If then the Creator is the evil tree which brings forth evil fruit, we must admit that there is another God, the good tree bringing forth good fruit.²¹ In point of fact, in all the Old Testament we find a God who is not the one of the Gospel. To the precept of the Law, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," the Gospel opposes: "if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other."²² Elias brought down fire from heaven on the soldiers who were sent to take him; Christ forbids his apostles to act in that manner.²³ Eliseus sent bears against the children who mocked him; Christ says: "Suffer little children to come to me."²⁴ Moses extended his hands on the mountain so that Israel might exterminate its enemies; Christ extended his hands on the Cross to save sinners.²⁵ Josue stopped the sun so that carnage might continue; the Saviour said: "Let not the sun go down on thy wrath."²⁶

The God of the Old Testament

In these short and crisp sentences we find the argumentation of the man who had one day come forth from his obscurity to ask the presbyters: "A good tree can bring forth only good fruit. explain that to me," and who, insisting on a strict literalism, was quite ready to criticise the just God and his prophets.

To begin with the Fall: how was it that God, if He was good and omniscient and almighty, did not know how to prevent the sin of Adam?

Why did He permit that man, who was his image and likeness, or rather his own substance by the nature of his soul, should be circumvented by the devil, disobey his law, and incur death? If He were good, He would not have consented to such a misfortune; being omniscient, He ought to have known it in advance; being almighty, He could have prevented it; and so this catastrophe would never have happened, for these three attributes of the Divine majesty would not have allowed it. If indeed it came about, it is clear that that God cannot be regarded as good, omniscient, and almighty.²⁷

²¹ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, ii; cf. II, xxiv.

²² Tertullian, *ibid.*, II, xviii, cf. IV, vi, Adamantius, I, xv.

²³ Tertullian, *ibid.*, IV, xxii.

²⁴ Tertullian, *ibid.*; Adamantius, I, xvi.

²⁵ Adamantius, I, xi.

²⁶ Adamantius, I, xiii.

²⁷ Text quoted by Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, II, v.

Marcion passes on to Jewish history, and continues his criticism. This God, he says, is inconstant: he prescribed the sabbath rest, and yet ordered the Ark to be carried around Jericho for eight successive days.²⁸ He forbade idolatry, and yet He ordered representations of the brazen serpent, the cherubim and seraphim.²⁹ He said he did not require sacrifices, and yet He took pleasure in the sacrifices of Abel and Noe.²⁹ He chose Saul, and repented of it.³⁰ He rejected Solomon.³¹ He threatened the Ninevites with a punishment He did not inflict.³² He was ignorant, for He asked Adam where he was, and he had to descend towards Sodom and Gomorrah in order to find out what was taking place there.³³ He was cruel, for Moses had to beseech him to forgive and to repress his anger.³⁴ He was partial and despotic: He hardened Pharaoh's heart, pillaged the Egyptians, and exterminated the Chanaanites: "Josue conquered the holy land, imposing on it an imperious and cruel domination; Christ forbids all domination, and preaches mercy and peace."³⁵

Marcion invokes not only Jewish history but also the whole creation against its author. He is the god of locusts and of scorpions;³⁶ the body especially is full of miseries and of shame in its natural functions and in the work of generation: "marriage is an evil and indecent thing."³⁷ And Tertullian presents these heretics as "declaiming, with all the bitterness they can, about the filth attached to birth and infancy, and the unworthiness of the flesh."³⁸

Such oratorical developments were easy, and were bound to produce an impression on Marcion's disciples. But if this passionate outburst was enough to disturb men's minds, it was nevertheless not sufficient to act as a basis for a doctrine. Its opponents could make an easy reply: If one must take literally all Marcion's invectives, why stop half-way, and regard the god of the Jews as a just

²⁸ Tertullian, *ibid.*, II, xxi.

²⁹ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, II, xxii.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, II, xxiii-xxiv.

³¹ *Ibid.*, II, xxiii.

³² *Ibid.*, II, xxiv.

³³ *Ibid.*, II, xxv.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, II, xxvi.

³⁵ Origen, *Hom. XII*, 1, in *Jes. Nave*. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

³⁶ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, xvii; IV, xxvi.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, I, xxix.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, xxi.

god? And how read the Gospel, however mutilated, if to Christ be not attributed a real body?³⁹

Marcion's Bible

In order to give to this doctrine a Scriptural foundation, Marcion constructed a Bible. He rejected the Old Testament, and of the New he retained only the Gospel of St. Luke, excising its first two chapters and the features which did not agree with his theology, retaining also ten epistles of St. Paul, but rejecting the pastoral epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the ten retained, he excised all that he regarded as favouring Judaism, attributing these features to false apostles.⁴⁰

This new Bible was the fruit, not of a critical study, but of a theological thesis.⁴¹ Marcion was as indifferent to the science of exegesis as to metaphysical speculation. He was a man of action who regarded the Bible only as an *instrumentum* which he could utilise for his purpose. Thus prepared, he carried out the constitution of his doctrine and of his Church. He sets forth a dualism, which divides the whole world into two spheres: the visible and the invisible worlds. The invisible world is the work of the supreme God, who resides there in the third heaven, and knows the whole universe, but is known only by the invisible world. The visible world was created by the Demiurge, who is its master, and thinks himself to be the sole master.⁴² Accordingly we read his protestations in the Old Testament, which is wholly inspired by this Demiurge: "I am the only God, and above me there is no other." We already notice that this dualism does not presume an opposition between the two gods, but only a distinction of person and nature, a division of domains, and, in the lower God, a complete ignorance of the sovereign Deity.

This inferior God is not the god of evil. He is a despot who has placed man in this miserable material world created by him, and has,

³⁹ *Ibid.*, II, xi; IV, xxi.

⁴⁰ On the modifications made in the text of St. Paul, cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-48; in St. Luke, *ibid.*, pp. 48-57. On the motive underlying these alterations, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

⁴¹ Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁴² Cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, xvi: "As neither the other world nor its God are seen, it follows that they distribute the two kinds of beings, visible and invisible, between the two creating gods, and reserve for their god the invisible world."

by breathing on him, given him a soul which comes from his own substance. This imperfect and weak substance was mingled with matter, and soiled by its contact. Yet the Demiurge was jealous of this imperfect creature: he refused him the knowledge of good and evil, and expelled him from the earthly paradise.⁴³

There follows the lamentable history of this fallen race, enslaved to a despotic governor. The Jewish people, more evil than any other, became the people of the Demiurge, who for their sakes afflicted and exterminated the rival peoples. The Jews received from him a Law which doubtless contains virtuous precepts, but their virtue is of a narrow and mean kind. The rites prescribed, such as the rite of circumcision, are an image of the creation, and manifest the same defects: foolishness, weakness, and sometimes shamefulness. The prophets were merely the messengers of the Demiurge; they all, and John the Baptist, who closed the series, were completely ignorant of God.

The Coming of the Saviour

The supreme God, the "Strange God" who owed nothing to the miserable human race, willed to save it. "In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, in the time of Pontius Pilate, Jesus descended from heaven at Capharnaum, a town in Galilee, and taught there in the synagogue"⁴⁴—such is the commencement of Marcion's Gospel.

The Demiurge had promised the coming of a Messias, through his prophets. He was to be a man of the race of David, anointed with the Spirit of the Demiurge: he has not yet come. But the good God has sent his Son, who is distinct from Him only in name: "Our God, according to the Marcionites, did not reveal himself at the beginning, nor by the creation, but has done so by himself in Christ Jesus."⁴⁵

Passing through the heaven of the Demiurge, Jesus appeared here below. He could not take a material body, for matter is essentially evil, but only the similitude or appearance of a body. Hence there was no Nativity, childhood, or baptism, but a sudden appearance in the synagogue of Capharnaum.

Christ preached and performed miracles, but did not formally

⁴³ Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 146 *et seq.*

⁴⁴ Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

⁴⁵ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, ii, xix. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

oppose the Demiurge or announce the distinction between the two gods. He was surrounded by disciples of the Demiurge, who praised their God because of the miracles of Jesus. Jesus allowed this. Peter recognised him as the Messias—evidently, the Messias of the Demiurge; Jesus imposed silence on him, in order to prevent the spread of a lie.⁴⁶

The "edict of Christ" consists of the beatitudes, which exalt the poor and curse the rich. Leaving aside all the texts of the Old Testament in which God promises good things to the poor,⁴⁷ Marcion sees in this preaching of Jesus the opposite of the preaching of the Demiurge. Those who are now pronounced blessed are those who were the pariahs of the old Law, the unfortunate and sinners.⁴⁸

Redemption

By his preaching and his miracles, Jesus shows that he was more powerful than the Demiurge. But he did not will to seize his dominion by force; instead he redeemed mankind by his death.⁴⁹ After death he descended into hell, to deliver all those whom the Demiurge had condemned:

Marcion says that Cain and his like, and the Sodomites and Egyptians and their like, and all the pagans who have lived in all kinds of wickedness, have been saved by the Lord. When He descended into hell they came before him, and He took them into his kingdom. But Abel and Enoch and Noe, and the other just men and the patriarchs of the time of Abraham, and all the prophets, and all those who have pleased God, have not been saved. For he says that they knew that their God had always tempted them, and thought he was tempting them still on that occasion. Hence they did not come before Jesus, and did not believe in his message. And because of that their souls remain in hell.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Tertullian, *ibid.*, IV, xviii and xxi.

⁴⁷ Tertullian, *ibid.*, IV, xiv.

⁴⁸ Tertullian, *ibid.*, IV, xi: "He brings forward as an argument the choice of a publican by the Lord, for it is the choice, by an opponent of the Law, of a man who was a stranger to the Law and to Judaism."

⁴⁹ This redemption had a decisive importance for Marcion; he regarded it as a proof that mankind belonged to someone other than the sovereign God, and that the death of Jesus was required in order to set men free. He finds this redemption not only in *Gal.* iii, 13, but in *Gal.* ii, 20, where he reads "he who redeemed me" instead of "he who loved me" (Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 171).

⁵⁰ Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, I, xxviii, 3, Harnack writes (*op. cit.*, p. 169): "We must stop at this point, for it is the one which the Fathers of the Church regarded as the height of the blaspheming wickedness of Marcion, and still shocks

The apostles of Christ did not maintain the Gospel in all its depth and purity: they preached the Demiurge. The Saviour raised up St. Paul in order to renew and carry out his work. At the Council of Jerusalem, the apostles came near to Him, but they allowed themselves again to stray from Him, and Paul alone preached the Gospel, the essence of which is salvation by faith, for it is enough to believe and to love.⁵¹

The Marcionite Church

But only an élite can remain on these heights, as Marcion is aware: "The Demiurge is with the crowd, the Saviour with the sole elect."⁵² When he descended into hell, Jesus took from thence all men in order to save them, except the just of the Old Testament. But on earth, the virtue of his death and the preaching of his Gospel are able to save only a few chosen ones, and thus, in consequence of his incarnation, the condition of man appears to be worse and salvation more rare.⁵³

This contradiction offends reason, but the violent passion which carried away Marcion and his disciples led them to ignore this. They delighted in the spectacle of the strange God descending unexpectedly into this miserable world which did not know Him, and to which He owed nothing; they marvelled also at the laborious existence of the "companions of misery," who, upheld solely by faith and love, pass through this evil world, persecuted by the jealousy of the Demiurge, but faithful to their unknown God. And like the other Gnostics, they are easily consoled about the smallness of their numbers: are they not the élite?

us to-day. Yet it all agrees with Marcion's principles." That is correct, but we recall the evangelical text dear to Marcion: "A good tree brings forth only good fruit."

⁵¹ Tertullian here presses Marcion (I, xxvii): The Marcionites do not hold that the good God should be feared. But then how is pleasure to be resisted? And how is persecution to be endured? Is life to be purchased by apostasy? *Absit, absit!* replies Marcion. Harnack adds (*op. cit.*, p. 175): "This *absit, absit*, is a religious document of the first order." On Harnack's admiration of Marcion, cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XV, 1925, pp. 361-362.

⁵² Clement, *Strom.*, III, x, 69. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

⁵³ Harnack (*op. cit.*, p. 173, n. 1) tries to lessen this contradiction by pointing out that the end of the world was at that time expected soon, and that in consequence that evil state of things was only to last for a little while.

Marcion imposed upon his disciples a severe asceticism;⁵⁴ he organised them into churches which quickly multiplied and lasted for a long time. At the end of the second century Marcionism had penetrated everywhere, and in all the provinces it threatened the Church. It was combated by Dionysius at Corinth, Irenæus at Lyons, Theophilus at Antioch, Philip of Gortyna in Crete, Tertullian at Carthage, Hippolytus and Rhodon in Rome, and Bardesanes at Edessa. In the fourth century Epiphanius writes: ⁵⁵ "This heresy is still widespread in Rome and Italy, in Egypt and in Palestine, in Arabia and in Syria, in Cyprus and in the Thebaid, and even in Persia and other places." ⁵⁶ Even in the fifth century, about 445, the Armenian Eznik combats it, not as an extinct heresy but as still a fearful plague.⁵⁷ But from the third century Manichæism will gather recruits from the Marcionite communities and assimilate them to itself, first in the West, and then in the East.

Its Inconsistent Theology

This rapid and lasting diffusion of Marcionism was due to the impetuous spirit which its founder had impressed upon it. But this sentimental urge could not be of much assistance to its theology, which remained hesitating. The lofty construction of Marcion was a building erected in haste, which its new occupants had constantly to re-erect according to new plans. From the second century disagreement was evident: certain Marcionites remained attached to the teaching of the Master, and recognised two divine principles. Such were Potitus and Basilicus, mentioned by Rhodon, the head of the Roman School after Tatian.⁵⁸ At the same date, Apelles allowed only one principle;⁵⁹ others distinguish three, as for in-

⁵⁴ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I, xiv, xxviii: Tertullian criticises this as illogical: "Why impose on flesh so weak or so unworthy so heavy or so glorious a load of sanctity?" Cf. I, xxix; IV, xi, xvii, xxix, xxxiv, xxxviii; V, vii, viii, xv, xviii; *De praescr.*, x, xxx; Hippolytus, *Philos.*, VII, xxix; Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 303, n. 1.

⁵⁵ *Haereses*, XLII, 1.

⁵⁶ Cf. Harnack, *Ausbreitung*, pp. 931-932; *Marcion*, pp. 153-160.

⁵⁷ Cf. L. Mariès, *Le De Deo d'Eznik de Kolb*, Paris, 1924, especially pp. 59 et seq.

⁵⁸ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xiii, 3-4.

⁵⁹ Rhodon, *ibid.*, 5-7: "The aged Apelles, whom we met, was convicted of saying many queer things. Thus, he said that there was no necessity to split hairs, but

stance Syneros, mentioned by Rhodon,⁶⁰ and Lucanus or Lucian, mentioned by Tertullian,⁶¹ Prepon, mentioned by Hippolytus,⁶² and Megathius, a real or fictitious personage who maintains in the dialogue of Adamantius *De recta fide* the distinction between three principles, while another Marcionite, Marcus, allows only two.⁶³ This three-principle Marcionism was attacked by Ephrem⁶⁴ and Eznik.⁶⁵ The Marcionites who thus distinguish three principles admit, in addition to God the Father of Christ and the God of the Jews, a third evil God, who is the God of the pagans. This idea, which became ever more general among the Marcionites,⁶⁶ displays the radical dualism which Marcion himself had endeavoured to avoid, but the blind impulse he had given to the movement was bound to lead to it in spite of his efforts. Soon the shadowy figure of the Demiurge, the God of the Jews, will fade out, leaving only two rival principles, the good God and the evil deity. This is the

each one ought to remain as he believed. He affirmed that those who believe in the Crucified will be saved, provided only they are found with good works. He thought moreover that the most obscure question of all was, as we have said above, that concerning God. He said that there is only one principle, as we ourselves hold. . . . When I asked him: 'Whence you derive this thesis? And how can you say that there is only one principle? Explain this to me,' he replied that the prophesies constitute their own refutation, for they contain no truth; they are contradictory, untruthful, and opposed to each other. But as to why there is only one principle, he confessed that he did not know, but that he felt himself led to affirm it, that such was his impression. And when I adjured him to tell me the truth, he swore that in all sincerity he did not know why there is only one ungenerated God, but that he believed this to be so. I began to laugh, and reproached him to setting himself up as a master, when he was aware that he did not have the knowledge of what he taught." Harnack (*Marcion*, pp. 185-187) greatly admires these words of Apelles: this Marcionite, according to him, excels Kant and Schleiermacher: he has recognised that the essence of religion is hope in the Crucified; "this hope has separated him not only from science, but also from the monotheistic faith." And he concludes: "Apelles is, before Augustine, the only Christian theologian with whom we could agree to-day without requiring a laborious accommodation." Harnack's admiration is certainly excessive, but Apelles' admission is revealing: this warm and confused religion is indeed the religion of the times of the last Antonines and the Severi. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 77 *et seq.*

⁶⁰ Rhodon, in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, 4.

⁶¹ *De resurrectione*, III. Cf. pseudo-Tertullian, vi; Epiphanius, *Haer.*, xliii.

⁶² *Philos.*, VII, xxxi.

⁶³ *De recta in Deum fide*, I, ii.

⁶⁴ *Opera syr.*, Rome, 1740, Vol. II, p. 444.

⁶⁵ *Trans. Schmid*, Vienna, 1900, IV.

⁶⁶ This distinction between three principles was widespread among the Gnostic sects outside Marcionism, e.g. in Heracleon (cf. above, p. 637).

great antithesis of Manichæism, which will supplant all those of Marcion, which nevertheless prepared the way for it.⁶⁷

§ 3. MONTANISM¹

Characteristics of Montanism

Montanism differed greatly from the heresies we have just studied. Gnosticism was an invasion of foreign elements, especially hellenic and oriental, into Christianity; Marcionism was a repudiation of the whole of the Old Testament. Montanism was not like that: it aimed at holding only Christian doctrine, and this in its entirety. At first it was only a movement of religious enthusiasm, similar to revivals in Protestantism. It presented itself as an outpouring of the Spirit, and as the rule of the Paraclete foretold by Jesus in the Gospel of St. John. It promulgated no new doctrine, but it desired to group all Christians together, to separate them from the world, and prepare them for the kingdom of God which was imminent. Yet these aims did in fact constitute a new Gospel, and when faced by the opposition of the Church the Montanists were very soon led to form a church of their own, and what was at first only a group of prophets and enthusiasts degenerated into a sect.

The Prophetic Charism

If we wish to understand the rise of this movement, we must remember the part played by prophecy in the Church.² Without

⁶⁷ In the Marcionite theology, the contradictions concerning the number of divine principles are the most important, but not the only ones. Christology contains others. For Marcion, as we have said, Christ had only a phantom body. Apelles is opposed to his master on this point also: his Christ had a real body, which he took to heaven (cf. Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, vi and viii). For Marcion and the majority of his disciples, Christ is the revealer of the good God, and later on we find Marcionites approximating to the Sabellians (e.g. Eustathius, *apud* Socrates, *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xii; Sozomen, VI, xi, cf. Harnack, *Marcion*, p. 275*). But we nevertheless also find Marcionites who teach that Christ was the son of the evil deity, afterwards abandoned for the good God (Epiphanius, XI,II, xiv. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 287*; cf. p. 207). These contradictions show that the ecclesiastical organisation which Marcion gave to his sect was powerless to secure its unity.

¹ On Montanism, see: P. de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste; Les sources de l'histoire du montanisme*, 2 vols., Paris, 1913.

² Cf. P. de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, pp. 112-123.

going back to the Acts and St. Paul, we notice in the *Didache* the important place occupied by the prophets at the end of the first century: "You shall take and give to the prophets all firstfruits of the produce of winepress and threshing floor, of oxen and of sheep, for they are your high priests."³ Thirty or forty years later, Hermas at Rome will still give to prophets precedence over priests.⁴ At the beginning of the second century, we note the prophetic charism in the great bishops and martyrs, Ignatius and Polycarp; others regarded as prophets were Quadratus and the daughters of Philip,⁵ Melito of Sardis,⁶ and Ammias of Philadelphia.⁷ These were not isolated instances: St. Justin, in his argument with Trypho, brings forward the prophetic charisms existing in the Church, which prove that these spiritual gifts have been transferred from the Jews to the Christians.⁸ About 180, St. Irenæus gives in turn a similar testimony: "We often hear about brethren in the Church who have prophetic charisms and who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, speak in all kinds of tongues, and who in order to be of use, manifest the secrets of men and interpret the mysteries of God."⁹ These gifts were still more widespread in the confessors of the faith: it was one of their privileges to "converse familiarly with the Lord."¹⁰

These prophetic communications, very frequent in the passions of the martyrs, appear in the daily life of the Church as exceptional gifts, and those who possess them are privileged people. Nevertheless the Christian prophets form as it were a succession and a tradition. The Montanists tried to take advantage of this,¹¹ while their Catholic opponents, far from denying the existence of such a

³ *Didache*, xiii; cf. xv.

⁴ *Shepherd*, Vis., III, i, 8. In his Commandments, x, 12, Hermas describes a true prophet, and shows how he is distinguished from a false one. Cf. *ibid.* on false prophets.

⁵ *Hist. eccles.*, III, xxxvii, 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, V, xxiv, 5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, V, xvii, 2.

⁸ *Dial.*, lxxxii.

⁹ *Adv. haer.*, V, vi, 1; cf. II, xxxii, 4: ". . . others have the knowledge of future events and of prophetic visions and words"; I, xiii, 4; III, xi, 9; III, xxiv, 1; IV, xxvi, 5; IV, xxvii, 2.

¹⁰ This expression is found in the Acts of the Martyrs of Smyrna (ii, 2), the Martyrs of Lyons (*Hist. eccles.*, V, i, 56), and of St. Perpetua (iv).

¹¹ P. de Labriolle (*op. cit.*, p. 123) rightly calls attention to this traditionalist feature of primitive Montanism: "What strikes us in all this primitive period of the sect is the marked traditionalist spirit which animated the followers of the prophets and the latter themselves."

tradition, argued from it against the disciples of the new prophets: "If, as they say, after Quadratus and Ammias of Philadelphia, the women around Montanus received the prophetic charism by way of succession, let them show who among the disciples of Montanus and his women have in fact inherited this gift from them. For the Apostle holds that the prophetic charism must exist in the Church until the final prophecy. But these have no one to show in the fourteen years since the death of Maximilla."¹²

Danger of False Prophets

This belief in the diffusion of the prophetic spirit was not without its danger: some might claim gifts which in fact they did not possess, and, worse still, charlatans could deceive Christians by semblances of prophecies. The danger was so serious that in the *Didache* and the *Shepherd* of Hermas, the faithful are put on their guard against false prophets, and they are given signs whereby these are to be recognised.

The danger was still more evident in circles in which the Last Day was awaited. Hippolytus at the beginning of the third century mentions two recent incidents which enable us to understand the prophecies of Montanus and the enthusiasm they aroused:

A Syrian bishop persuaded several brethren to go out into the desert, to be ready for Christ, with their wives and children; they wandered in the mountains and along the roads. The governor nearly arrested them as brigands, but was prevented from doing so by his wife who was a Christian. In Pontus, another bishop, a pious and humble man but one who trusted too much in his visions, had three dreams. He began to prophesy: "this and that will come to pass." And lastly: "Know, my brethren, that the judgment will take place in a year's time, and if what I tell you does not come to pass, have no more faith in the Scriptures, but act as you will." Nothing happened, he was confounded, brethren were scandalised, virgins married, and those who had sold their lands were reduced to beggary.¹³

¹² Anonymous anti-Montanist writing, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvii, 4.

¹³ In *Daniel*, III, xviii-xix. In the middle of the third century, Firmilian gives an account of a recent prophetess in Cappadocia, who set out for Jerusalem with a crowd of followers. These excesses were particularly alarming in Phrygia: the orgiastic cultus of the Great Mother had prepared the way for Montanism. Cf. Graillot, *Le Culte de Cybèle*, 1912, p. 404.

Origin of Montanism

The beginnings of Montanism are narrated in an anti-Montanist treatise addressed to Abercius¹⁴ quoted at length by Eusebius.¹⁵ When Gratus was proconsul of Asia,¹⁶ a neophyte named Montanus, thought to be a Gallic convert,¹⁷ began to prophesy. People in his village, Ardabau, on the borders of Mysia and Phrygia, were divided in their opinion of him. Very soon two women, Priscilla and Maximilla, began to prophesy like him, addressing those present in a way which caused a great impression. "The Spirit praised some, and these were overjoyed and swollen with foolish pride in consequence; the Spirit puffed them up by the greatnesses of his promises. But sometimes the Spirit rebuked them openly in a sharp and faithful way, so as to merit belief. But there were very few of the Phrygians who allowed themselves to be deceived."¹⁸

Montanist Prophecy

When they encountered resistance, these new prophets stiffened their attitude: "The spirit of pride taught them to blaspheme the whole Catholic Church under heaven, because the pseudo-prophetic spirit was given neither honour nor admittance." They claimed to

¹⁴ This Abercius was bishop of the famous inscription: Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 581 *et seq.*

¹⁵ On this anonymous work, cf. P. de Labriolle, *Les sources de l'histoire du montanisme*, pp. xx-xxix. The date of this work can be determined by the following indication (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 19): "It is now more than thirteen years since Maximilla died, and no war, either local or general, has taken place in the world. Indeed, through the mercy of God, the Christians themselves have enjoyed a permanent peace." These thirteen years of peace direct us to the reign of Commodus; the death of Maximilla must have been 179 or 180, and the anonymous work must have been written in 193. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *Histoire du montanisme*, pp. 580 *et seq.*

¹⁶ We do not know the date of the proconsulate of Gratus (P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 574); Epiphanius puts the commencement of Montanism in the 19th year of Antoninus the Pious (157) (*Haer.*, XLVIII, i), Eusebius in the 12th year of Marcus Aurelius (*Chronicle*, cf. Karst, *Eusebii Werke*, V, 1911, p. 222; P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 570). This second date is the most probable one.

¹⁷ St. Jerome (*Epist.*, XI.I, iv) says he was a eunuch. On this letter, cf. *Sources*, pp. xciv *et seq.* In the *Dialexis* which P. de Labriolle (*ibid.*, p. cvi) attributes to Didymus, Montanus is set forth as "a priest of Apollo." P. de Labriolle (*ibid.*, p. xcvi) does not interpret this expression literally: "I think the name of Apollo is used here, not as a precise historic determination, but only to designate paganism in general." He thinks (*Histoire du montanisme*, p. 20) that Montanus had been a priest of Cybele. So also Graillot, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

¹⁸ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 9.

be the prophets promised by Jesus,¹⁹ and that it was God who spoke in them:

Oracle I: "It is I, the almighty Lord God who dwell in man."

II: "I am neither an angel nor a messenger, but I the Lord God, the Father, am come."

III: "I am the Father and the Son and the Paraclete."

Maximilla, Oracle XII: "I am chased away as a wolf from the sheep; but I am not a wolf: I am word, spirit and power."

XIII: "Listen not to me, but listen to Christ."

All this might be understood in the sense of their theory of inspiration,²⁰ but Montanus went farther. In the discourse after the Last Supper, Jesus had announced the coming of the Paraclete; these promises were now being realised. Montanus was the Paraclete, and the new revelation went beyond all the preceding ones, even those of Christ and the apostles.²¹

The Montanist Propaganda

While the claims of the Montanists were growing, the sect itself was being organised. Disciples, rich and poor, brought their contributions to Montanus; a fund was opened, administered by a certain Theodotus; soon chosen agents were sent everywhere, paid

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12: "They say they are the ones the Lord promised to send to his people" (cf. *Sources*, p. 73). Cf. Matt. xxvii, 34: "Behold I send to you prophets."

²⁰ Oracle V of Montanus: "Man is like a lyre, and I hover over him as a plectrum. The man sleeps, but I am awake. For it is the Lord who casts out the heart of men in order to give to men a new heart." Graillot (*op. cit.*, p. 404): "That is the way in which the worshippers of Attis identified themselves with their god."

²¹ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xiv: "They had the impudence to claim that Montanus was the Paraclete, and the women who accompanied him, Priscilla and Maximilla, the prophetesses of the Paraclete." Hippolytus, *Philos.*, VIII, xix: "They claim that the Spirit, the Paraclete, has come upon them (Priscilla and Maximilla) and above these they also regarded as a prophet a certain Montanus. . . . They declare that they have learnt from them something more than the Law, the prophets and the gospels. They reverence these young women more than the apostles and any charism, and some of them go so far as to say that there is in them something more than was in Christ." Pseudo-Tertullian, VII: "They all repeat this blasphemy, that in the Apostles there was the Holy Spirit but not the Paraclete, and that the Paraclete has spoken through Montanus more than Christ spoke in the Gospel, and not only more but better and greater things." Didymus, *De Trinitate*, III, xli, 2: "As the apostle wrote: . . . 'when that which is perfect shall come, then that which was imperfect will be abolished,' they maintain that Montanus has come, and that he has the perfection of the Paraclete."

by Montanus. Among these are mentioned: "Alcibiades, one of the earliest of the faithful, Themison, the boon companion of Maximilla, and Alexander, upon whom the cruel attacks by the orthodox weighed so heavily; and later on, Miltiades, who held an important position, and by whose name the sect was sometimes designated."²² This propaganda was supported by writings which were spread everywhere, and of which many traces are found: a collection of oracles and psalms, the Montanist reply to the work of Miltiades,²³ the "Catholic" letter of Themison, and possibly letters to the churches of Rome and Lyons.²⁴ The Catholics who opposed the Montanists criticised their impudent claims, their venality, and their worldly lives.²⁵

As a result of this keen propaganda, Montanism spread with an astonishing rapidity. It appeared in Phrygia in 172; already in 177 the churches of Lyons and Rome were alarmed at the commotion caused, of which they felt the effects. In 179, apparently, Maximilla died, and the prophecies died down, but these seven years had enabled the sect to invade Asia: "It was not only the Phrygian local centres, Ardabau, Pepuza, Tymion, Cumane, and Otrous which were affected. More important cities, Apamea, Hierapolis, Hieropolis were threatened. As far as Syria to the south, Galatia to the east, Lydia to the west, and beyond the Sea of Propontis to Thrace, the spread of the plague caused very grave anxiety. The passing of the years did not weaken its virulence, for some twenty years at least after the first outburst Ancyra was at grips with it. Whole cities like Thyatira went over to the reformers, and very soon people spoke currently of the churches of the prophets, that is, of communities wholly won over to the Prophecy."²⁶

Resistance of the Church in the East

The bishops realised the danger. They might have been more tolerant towards a rigorous asceticism which was content to preach fasting and abstinence, forbid second marriages, and recommend

²² P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

²³ There were two Miltiades involved in this matter, one being a Montanist, and the other an anti-Montanist. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

²⁴ On these works, cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 145, n. 2, and the references there given to other parts of the same work.

²⁵ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xviii, 11, in which Apollonius is quoted.

²⁶ P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

chastity,²⁷ and even towards a Millenarianism like that of Justin and Irenæus which also made room for a less literal interpretation of the prophecies of the Apocalypse,²⁸ but they could not suffer a message which, calling itself prophetic, claimed to go beyond the Gospel and to reject the hierarchy. Synods were convoked, the first which history mentions, and the heresy was therein condemned.²⁹ These measures were certainly efficacious: the Montanists were regarded as excommunicated, and even persecution did not modify this severe attitude.³⁰ Closely linked together, the Asiatic bishops succeeded in arresting the disease and in expelling from the Church the adherents of the new prophecy: by the end of the second century they had won the day.³¹

In the West

In the West, the danger was not so great, and there also it was promptly averted. In 177, the confessors of Lyons, who had been consulted, sent to Rome their opinion on Montanism. They adopted a moderate attitude, careful for the peace of the Church, but did their best to put the faithful on guard against the new prophecy;³²

²⁷ This rigorism is displayed, for instance, in the correspondence between Pinytos, Bishop of Cnossos, in Crete, with Dionysius of Corinth (*Hist. eccles.*, II, xxiii, 7-8). Dionysius had exhorted Pinytos "not to impose on the brethren the heavy burden of chastity, but to bear in mind the weakness of the majority." Pinytos replies that he "receives with admiration what Dionysius has said to him, but he thinks he ought to give his people a more solid nourishment, in more perfect works, for fear that, being fed constantly on milk, they gradually lapse into childhood." Eusebius adds: "We can see in this reply the orthodoxy of Pinytos' faith, the care he had of the needs of his flock, and his understanding of divine things." Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

²⁸ On this Millenarianism, cf. *infra*, pp. 686-688.

²⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 10. The history of these synods is given in some detail in the *Libellus synodicus* of Pappus, quoted by Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des conciles*, Vol. I, p. 128; but this ninth-century document has no authority; cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 30. Of greater importance is the letter of Serapion of Antioch (190-211), some portions of which are given by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xix). Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-155.

³⁰ Cf. the anonymous anti-Montanist writer (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 22): "When the faithful members of the Church are called to suffer martyrdom for the true faith, and find themselves with martyrs who belong to the Phrygian heresy, they keep apart from these and continue to the end without any contact with them, not wishing to give their consent to the spirit of Montanus and the women. The fact is well known, and has taken place in our own time, at Apamea on the Meander, among those who bore witness with Caius and Alexander of Eumeneia."

³¹ Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

³² Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, iii, 4) does not give us the text of this consultation, but he tells us that it was "pious and very orthodox." On this opinion, cf.

St. Irenæus, who was then their messenger, persevered in this same attitude.³³ At Rome, Montanism was condemned by Pope Zephyrinus about the year 200.³⁴ At Carthage the sect was to gain in Tertullian a valuable but somewhat independent convert: after he had seceded from the Church, we find him separating from the Montanists and founding a little group of Tertullianists.

We have already seen a like disunity in the Valentinians and the Marcionites. The tendency towards schism is found not only at Carthage but also in the East among the followers of the new prophecy. The "followers of Proclus" oppose the "followers of Eschinus": the former have only the errors common to all the Montanists; the latter identify the Father with the Son.³⁵ Soon Mani will imitate the claims of Montanus and say that he is the organ of the Paraclete; but that which in Phrygia was only an outburst of enthusiasm will become in Persia a dualistic heresy which will gravely threaten the Church.

P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 219 *et seq.* The Acts of the Lyons martyrs display an ardent piety, and a great respect for heavenly visions and communications, but nothing here is Montanist. As for Alcibiades, he fasted on bread and water, was that a Montanist practice for him? Nothing proves that it was, and what is certain is that he abandoned this fasting on the advice of Attalus, himself enlightened by a vision. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 220-230.

³³ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 230-242.

³⁴ The indications given by Tertullian are difficult to interpret. Labriolle (*op. cit.*, p. 275) concludes: "It is between 198 and the very early years of the third century that we must put the intrigues of Praxeas, and they must have had Zephyrinus as their object."

³⁵ Pseudo-Tertullian, VII, and P. de Labriolle, *Sources*, p. 51, and *Histoire du Montanisme*, p. 275, n. 2; Bardy, *Didyme l'Aveugle*, pp. 237 *et seq.*

CHAPTER XVI

THE CATHOLIC REACTION

§ I. ST. IRENÆUS¹

The Struggle Against Heresy

DURING the second half of the second century, the whole Church was in a great ferment. Gnosticism, which had hitherto enticed from the fold only a few of the sheep, now threatened the whole flock; bold and unstable minds were indulging in dangerous speculations; secret traditions were opposed to or preferred to the common teaching of the Church; the morality preached by the apostles and bishops was considered too timid, and some wished to go beyond it and adopt a morality for the élite; the disciples of Marcion rejected the Old Testament, its prophets and its God, reserving their adoration for a strange God who had suddenly revealed himself in a Christ unknown to the Church; and lastly from Phrygia came a new prophecy, which announced to its disciples a spiritual gospel, superior to that of Jesus.

In presence of this great danger, the Church drew closer round its leaders, and through them closer to the apostles, to Christ and to God. This Catholic reaction manifested itself in many ways, in ecclesiastical discipline, in theology, in liturgy and worship. We shall shortly describe this strong movement, but we must first study the personal work of the great bishop who in those troubled

¹ Bibliography.—Works: *Adversus haereses*, ed. Massuet, Paris, 1710, reproduced in Migne, P.G., Vol. VII; ed. by W. W. Harvey, Cambridge, 1857. The Armenian translation of Books IV and V was published by Erwand Ter-Minassiantz in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. XXXV, 2, Leipzig, 1910. *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, published for the first time in an Armenian translation by Karapet Ter-Mekerttschian in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. XXXI, 2, Leipzig, 1907, and again in *Patrologia orientalis*, XII, 5, pp. 659-731, followed by a French translation by P. Barthoulot (pp. 747-802); this translation had first appeared in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. VI, 1916, pp. 361-432. Latin translation by S. Weber, Freiburg, 1917; English translation by J. Armitage Robinson, London, 1920.

Chief studies: Massuet, *Prolegomena*, in Migne, P.G., Vol. VII, 173-382; Freppel, *Saint Irenée*, Paris, 1861; A. Dufourcq, *Saint Irenée*, Paris, 1904; F. Vernet, article *Irenée*, in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, Vol. VII, 2, 1923, col. 2394-2533; Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 517-617.

times more than anyone else devoted himself to the task of repelling heresy.

Irenæus at Lyons

We first find St. Irenæus at Lyons, in the terrible days of the persecution of 177. The church of Lyons, as yet small in numbers, suffered terribly: its bishop, St. Pothinus, died in prison at the age of 90 as a result of ill treatment; and more than forty Christians were martyred. Those who thus sacrificed their lives were the ones who seemed to be the indispensable supports of the Gallic Christians.²

His Embassy to Rome

While awaiting death, the confessors did not cease to take an interest in the Church. Disturbed at the effects of the prophecy of Montanus, they sent various letters to the brethren of Asia and Phrygia, and also to Eleutherius, Bishop of Rome. "They desired, they said, to be ambassadors of peace between the churches" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, iii, 4). They requested Irenæus to go and see Eleutherius, sending with him this letter of recommendation:

We have requested our friend and the companion of our sufferings, Irenæus, to give you these letters, and we beg you to receive him well, as one who is zealous for the testament of Christ. If we thought that hierarchical rank would ensure justice, we would present him in the first place as a priest of the Church, for such he is (*Hist. eccles.*, V, iv, 2).

Thus the mission then given to Irenæus was to be an ambassador of peace. No other could have suited him better, and throughout his life he was to be a peacemaker, maintaining or re-establishing unity between the churches.

His Youth

His previous history and formation had prepared him for this office. About 190, writing to a friend of his childhood, Florinus,

² Expression used by the Lyons confessors (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, i, 13).

who had fallen into heresy, Irenæus thus reminded him of his youthful memories:

When you were still a child, I saw you with Polycarp; you were prominent at the imperial court, and endeavoured to gain his approbation. Indeed, I remember those times better than recent events. For the things I learnt when young became one with my soul and came to form part of it, so that I can say in what place the blessed Polycarp used to sit in order to speak, how he came in and went out, what was the character of his life, his physical appearance, the talks he had with people, how he told of his relations with John and with the others who had seen the Lord, how he reported their words and all that he had learnt from them concerning the Lord, His miracles and His teaching. All this Polycarp had gathered from those who had seen the Word of Life, and he related it all, in conformity with the Scriptures. I carefully listened to all these things then, by the grace of God given me; I have kept them in memory, not on paper but in my heart. By God's grace, I continue to recall them faithfully, and I can testify before God that if this blessed and apostolic presbyter had heard things such as these, he would have cried out and stopped his ears . . . and would have fled from the place where he had heard such words.³

This precious passage tells us about the youth of St. Irenæus;⁴ and reveals to us not only the circumstances of his life, but still more his moral and religious character: Irenæus desired to be and was to be above all a witness of tradition.

This tradition, which he had learnt at Smyrna from Polycarp and the other presbyters, was found by Irenæus also in Rome. His sojourn with this church has not been explicitly mentioned by him, but there are several indications of it, such as his recollections of St. Justin, and his knowledge of the church of Rome and its traditions.⁵ It was in all probability at Rome that Irenæus gathered information about the Gnostic heresy; it is hardly likely that he would have found such precise and detailed information at Lyons;

³ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xx, 5-7.

⁴ It enables us also to fix approximately the date of his birth. The martyrdom of St. Polycarp took place in 155, and so the birth of Irenæus must have been about 140 at the latest. Harnack (*Chronologie*, p. 333) thus concludes his own discussion on the date: "Irenæus was born a little before 142, perhaps between 135 and 142; the earliest limit, but an unlikely one, is 130." Zahn (*Realencyclopädie für protest. Theologie*, art. *Irenäus*, pp. 408-9, discusses the date at length and puts it earlier, about 115.

⁵ To these we may add the account of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, as it is found in the Moscow MS. (Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. II, 2, p. 985; Lelong, *S. Ignace*, p. 159), on its historic value, cf. Zahn, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

it was probably also at Rome that he familiarised himself with the Paschal tradition which differed from that of his church of Smyrna, and which nevertheless he adopted.⁶

His Works

By sending him to Eleutherius as their ambassador, the confessors of Lyons saved him from the persecution and ensured his future glorious ministry. We shall study in another chapter his government of the church of Lyons and his missionary efforts in Gaul,⁷ and so we need not do more than mention these here. At the same time we must point out that the episcopal office of the great bishop was throughout inseparable from his theological work. About this time Clement was teaching at Alexandria, and by lectures preparing the *Stromata* which he would soon collect together. Lyons was not Alexandria, and the missionary bishop had not the same leisure for study as the master of the Catechetical School. Irenæus writes in the Preface to his work: "We live among the Gauls, and in our dealings with them we often use barbarous language, and so you must not expect to find in our work either the art of words, which we have not learnt, or the power of style, or the art of pleasing, of which we are ignorant" (*Adversus haereses*, pref., 3). Later on, when speaking of the faith of the Church, he prefers to give the witness of the still barbarous Christian communities among Iberians and Celts, and in the East those of Egypt and Libya (*Ibid.*, I, x, 2). These have neither paper nor ink, but on their hearts the Spirit has engraved the message of salvation (*Ibid.*, III, iv, 2).

⁶ Cf. Holmes, *History of the Christian Church in Gaul*, pp. 46-47: "Was Irenæus 'directus' to the city of Lyons by St. Polycarp? . . . Irenæus was at Rome, and not at Smyrna or Lyons when Polycarp suffered. Moreover, Irenæus was not a follower of Polycarp in the Paschal Question, but observed the rule which Anicetus and others had adopted. Not a word is said by Irenæus as to the mission at Lyons being due to the initiation of Polycarp, nor is there any reliable evidence that the Churches of Asia Minor ever attempted missions to Gaul. . . . We know nothing of the origin of Pothinus. He probably, as Irenæus certainly, came from Rome. That he bore a Greek name does not prove that he came from Asia Minor. . . . The appeal of the Christians of Lyons to Eleutherius, and the fact that Irenæus, when bishop of Lyons, regarded the permanence of orthodox tradition in the Church as depending on the continuity of the Roman episcopate, seem to prove that the mission to Lyons came at least through Rome, if indeed it did not emanate from Rome."

⁷ Cf. *infra*, pp. 772-775.

The literary character of the works of Irenæus will bear the marks of the circumstances in which they were written, and of the urgent tasks which more than once interrupted the writer, but we also find in them the efforts of a missionary who, finding himself face to face with heresy, defended the neophytes he had won for Christ, and whom heresy threatened to entice away from him.

Irenæus wrote much.⁸ Two of his works have come down to us: the *Exposition and Refutation of False Gnosis*, and the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*. The former, often known by the title of the Latin translation *Adversus haereses*, is the more important. It consists of five books, composed at different times. In writing them the author had no prearranged plan, nor did he foresee the way in which they would develop. As we have said, Irenæus was not a speculative theologian who undertook to give to posterity an account and refutation of Gnosticism, but a bishop who had around him some souls disturbed by a pernicious propaganda which he set out to denounce and counteract.⁹

His Object

The primary aim of Irenæus was to unmask Gnosticism and to bring its systems into the full light of day. He writes thus at the end of his first book:

⁸ Cf. Vernet, *op. cit.*, cols. 2400-2410.

⁹ The first two books form an apologetic unit, and were the first ones to be written; Book I contains an exposition of the Gnostic systems, and Book II their refutation. The third book contains the great theological theses on which the whole edifice rests: Scripture and Tradition. In the fourth book Irenæus devotes himself to establishing against Marcion the unity of the divine plan in the history of revelation and of salvation. In the fifth he deals with the last things and particularly with the resurrection; he shows that the flesh is not an essentially evil principle, as the Gnostics maintained, but that it is capable of redemption and salvation. The date of the third book is determined approximately by the reference (III, iii, 3) to the pontificate of Eleutherus (175 to 189); Book II seems to allude (xxii, 2) to a state of persecution, which applies better to the reign of Marcus Aurelius than to that of Commodus. But Book IV (xxx, 1) speaks of a Christian penetration into the imperial palace, which best fits the time of Commodus, when, through the favour of Marcia, Christians were given some positions in the Emperor's entourage. Thus the work as a whole would date about the year 180. Of the Greek original we possess now only fragments quoted by later writers, especially Hippolytus, Eusebius and Epiphanius. Quotations from the first book are very numerous, they are rarer in the case of the other books, but usually concern the most important passages. The Latin translation, which we possess in its entirety, is very faithful and very early; it was made before the time of St. Augustine, who quoted from it. Some critics date it in the fourth century; others think that it was made at Lyons in the time of St. Irenæus. Books IV and V have come down to us also in an Armenian translation, which gives us a useful instrument of control.

To reveal their systems is to conquer them. That is why we have endeavoured to bring to light the whole body of this evil and cunning little beast, and by means of yourselves to make it known to all. There will then be no need of much speech to destroy this doctrine, for it will be known to all. If a wild beast is hidden in a wood and attacks and ravages from thence, one who isolates the wood, lets the light into it, and reveals the animal itself lightens the task of those who want to capture it. . . . Similarly we ourselves, by publishing their secrets and hidden mysteries, render unnecessary long discourses with a view to destroying them. . . . We shall refute them all in the next book. . . . It is not enough for us to unmask the beast, but we must also attack it from all sides (I, xxxi, 4).¹⁰

The plan was destined to produce the desired result. The success of Irenæus is shown by subsequent quotations from his work: these are so numerous that by combining them we could reconstitute almost the whole of the first book. For us to-day it is perhaps not the most interesting of the five: it reveals less to us of Irenæus himself than of his opponents, and among these not so much of the leaders as of the disciples; if we wish to determine the sources of Gnosticism we have to go elsewhere. As we have said, the Bishop of Lyons was not inspired by scientific curiosity, but by concern for the salvation of his flock. Even so, we can only admire the great labours involved in his investigation: in no other writer of that time can we find so detailed a description of this group of systems.

The Gnostic Peril

We have remarked that Irenæus's information must have been gathered by him for the most part during his stay in Rome. But he realised that the danger of the Gnostic plague was very close to him in Gaul, for it was already attacking these newly formed Christian communities.

¹⁰ This passage should be supplemented by the explanations given in the Preface: "We judged it necessary to make use of the writings of the disciples of Valentine, to enter into relations with some of them, and to master their teaching in order to reveal to you these tremendous and profound mysteries, which cannot be understood by all because not all have sufficiently strong minds. Study to know them in order to reveal them to those who are with you." He returns to this important point in the Preface to Book IV, 2: "Those who were before us and were much better than we are did not succeed in refuting the disciples of Valentine because they were ignorant of their doctrine, which we have set forth with great care in the first book. . . ."

After describing the sorceries of the Gnostic Marcus, Irenæus goes on:

Those who speak and act thus have even in our own regions led astray many women with seared consciences. Some have made public penance for it, others have been ashamed to do so and, taking refuge in silence, have gradually despaired of the divine life. Some have abandoned all things, others have remained undecided, being in the words of the proverb neither within nor without: such is the fruit they have gathered from the seed sown by the sons of gnosis (I, xiii, 7).

The disease was so close at hand and so dangerous that it is not surprising that the bishop who combated it could not regard it with the tranquil and detached curiosity of a twentieth-century scholar. He detested the heresy with all the love he had for God and for his flock. Sometimes he indulges in caustic Gallic humour (I, iv, 4); more often his tone is indignant. After transcribing the fantasies of the disciples of Marcus on the letters of the alphabet and their mysterious signification, he continues:

When you read this, my friend, I am certain you will laugh at their folly which thinks itself to be wisdom. But indeed it is lamentable to see sanctity, the greatness of truth, and the ineffable power and the dispensations of God thus twisted by these people and treated with *alpha* and *beta* and numbers (I, xvi, 3).

He is particularly bitter about the immorality of these people:

. . . There are some among them who give themselves up without restraint to the pleasures of the flesh, maintaining that one must concede carnal things to the carnal, and spiritual things to the spiritual. Some of them secretly corrupt the women to whom they teach this doctrine, and often women led astray by them and afterwards converted to the Church of God have confessed this fault with all their other errors. Others, banishing all shame, make a display of their disorders, and espouse the women they love and have stolen from their husbands. Others again, after a beginning full of reserve, claiming to live with these women as brother and sister, ultimately betray themselves by the fact that the sister is pregnant by the brother (I, vi, 3).

To authorise these licentious ways, some Gnostics set out to destroy the foundations of morality. Thus the disciples of Carpocrates claimed that good and evil differ only in human opinion;

they added that all things ought to be experienced here below; otherwise one will be condemned to have a body in a new existence (I, xxv, 4). Others, such as the Cainites, inspired by a kind of sadism, searched the Bible for the worst criminals as their patrons: Cain, Esau, Core, the Sodomites, and above all Judas, to whom they attributed a gospel (xxx, 2).

The Faith of the Church

To all these follies, Irenæus opposes with a touching serenity the faith of the Church:

The Church, although spread everywhere as far as the boundaries of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples faith in one single God, the Father Almighty, who has made heaven and earth and the seas and all that is in them; and in one Christ Jesus the Son of God, who was incarnate for our salvation; and in one Holy Spirit, who through the prophets has announced the dispensation, the advent and virginal birth, and passion and resurrection from the dead, and bodily ascension into heaven of the well-beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and his [second] coming, when He will appear in heaven at the right hand of the Father, to restore all things and raise up all flesh and all humanity, so that before Christ Jesus our Lord, God, Saviour and King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father, every knee may bow, in heaven on earth and in hell, and every tongue may confess Him, and that He may deal to all a just judgment, sending to eternal fire the evil spirits, lying and apostate angels, and also wicked, unjust, rebellious and blaspheming men, and giving everlasting life and eternal glory to the just, the saints, and those who have kept his commandments, and have remained in his love, some from the beginning and others since their conversion (I, x, 1).

This passage is, to the best of our knowledge, the earliest theological work in which we find this "canonical" form of reasoning, this use of the Creed invoked precisely as a rule of faith in order to judge and condemn heresy. For thirty or forty years, doctrinal conflicts have multiplied, and heresies have sprung up; in face of these manifold errors the Church affirms the unity of its faith:

This is the preaching which the Church has received, this is her faith, as we have said. And although she is dispersed throughout the whole world, she keeps it carefully, as if she dwelt in one single house,

and believes in it unanimously, as if she possessed but one soul and one heart, and in complete agreement she preaches, teaches and transmits it, as if she had but one mouth. Certainly the languages on the surface of the earth are different, but the force of tradition is one and the same. The churches founded in Germany have not another faith or another tradition, nor the churches founded amongst the Iberians, the Celts, in the East, in Egypt or in Libya, or the centre of the world. But just as the sun, God's handiwork, is one and identical in all the world, so also the preaching of the truth shines out everywhere and enlightens all those who wish to arrive at a knowledge of it. The most powerful speaker amongst the heads of the churches will not teach another doctrine—for no one is above the Master—and the weakest in word will not diminish this tradition. For as the faith is one and the same, it is neither enriched by one who is able to speak much about it, nor impoverished by one who can say only little about it (*ibid.*, 2).

Thus the unity in the teaching of the faith is shown, not only by a comparison of the various nations converted to Christianity, but, what is more striking, by comparing the ignorant with the wise. Gnosticism claimed to be the religion of the élite: Christianity appears as the religion of all humanity. Though infinitely distant from God, all men, whosoever they may be, are called by the same revelation to the same faith. Even so, theology will have its place in religion thus understood. Irenæus explains how this is:

The greater or less intelligence of men appears, not in the hypothesis of another God different from the one who is the Demiurge, creator and foster-father of this universe, as if this one did not suffice us, nor in the hypothesis of another Christ, or another Only begotten. But it appears in the study of what has been said in parables, in order to assimilate it to the faith; in the exposition of the action and dispensation of God towards humanity; in showing how merciful God has been, both in the apostasy of the rebel angels and in the disobedience of man; in explaining why one and the same God has made temporal and eternal, heavenly and earthly things; in trying to understand why this invisible God has willed to reveal himself to the prophets, and this not in one but in different forms; in explaining why the human race has received several testaments, and what is the peculiar character of each of these; in understanding with gratitude why the Word of God became flesh and suffered; in explaining why the coming of the Son of God has taken place in these latter times, that is, why the principle appears at the end; in bringing to light all that is contained in the Scriptures concerning the end and future things; in explaining why

condemned peoples have been made by God co-heirs, members of his body and of the communion of saints; in explaining how this mortal body will be clothed with immortality, and the corruptible with incorruptibility; and how it can be said that "Those who were not (his) people have become (his) people," "he who was not loved has become beloved"; "she who was abandoned has more children than she who had a husband." Concerning these and other like mysteries the Apostle exclaims: "O the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and how hidden are his ways!" (I, x, 3).

Emergence of Theology

This long passage is very interesting: we see in it the first effort of a great doctor to distinguish between theological speculation and the Faith. In the passages which immediately preceded this one and which have been transcribed above, Irenæus firmly opposed to the multiple fantasies of Gnosticism the unity of the Christian faith. Are Christians, then, forbidden all speculation on their faith? If this unjust constraint is imposed upon them, will they not be tempted to turn towards Gnosticism? The danger was not an imaginary one. The study of the Alexandrians, Clement and Origen, will show this: the faithful whom these teachers desired to help sought from them an interpretation of doctrine which would be in harmony with their culture. Not only their intellectual ambition but also their "love for Jesus" could not be content with an elementary catechism.¹¹

These hungry souls had to be given freedom to seek for what they desired. Irenæus understood this, and hence he opened to them this immense field of theology, the fruitfulness of which will never be exhausted by the labours of the doctors.

We must also note that certain mysteries seem to him to be more worthy of study: they are the ones which Gnosticism and Marcionism called in question, namely: the unity of God, the unity of Christ, the unity of the creative work in heaven and on earth, and of the divine revelation in the two Testaments, and also the great problems of salvation which trouble so many souls, such as the question put by Diognetus: "Why did Christ come so late?"; and all the mysteries of predestination and reprobation which are con-

¹¹ Origen, *In Joann.*, v, 8. We shall return to this passage in the chapter on Origen.

templated and adored in the *Epistle to the Romans*. We realise already that Irenæus will not be occupied solely with controversy: the reading of the Bible, especially of St. Paul, the missionary activity carried out through manifold perils and against innumerable obstacles, and the loving contemplation of the mysteries of God will unceasingly present to his faith and his theology new horizons, at once more luminous and more mysterious.

The Divine Transcendence

The second book is devoted to the refutation of the Gnostic errors. It contains, as has been rightly said, many acute and penetrating remarks.¹² This controversy has only a distant interest for us, but his treatment is governed by a wide theological perspective which is still illuminating for us to-day. Such is, to begin with, the affirmation of the unity of God, at the commencement of the book:

It is fitting that we should begin with the chief and fundamental thesis, which has as its object God the Creator, who made heaven and earth and all they contain, the God whom the blasphemers regard as the result of a Fall. We must show that there is nothing above Him nor after Him; that He created, not as a result of some other influence, but spontaneously and freely, inasmuch as He is the only God, the only Lord, the only Creator, the only Father, who alone contains all things and gives being to all things (II, i, 1).

This affirmation of the divine unity, so strongly set forth and constantly present to his mind, gives especial value to the passages in which he proclaims the divinity of the Son of God:

The Father is Lord, and the Son is Lord. The Father is God, and the Son is God; for He who is born of God is God. Thus, by the very essence and nature of his being we show that there is only one God, and yet according to the economy of our redemption, there is a Son and a Father.¹³

If, like Marcion, one were to suppose another principle, the most powerful of the two would be the true God (II, i, 2); we should

¹² So Lipsius, in his article in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, col. 268 a. Lipsius is an historian who is very well informed on Gnosticism.

¹³ *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, xlvii. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 545.

have to go on to infinity, always imagining another Pleroma, another God (II, i, 4). Hence we must either accept one God, the Creator of all that exists, or else an infinite multitude of gods (II, i, 5).

God has created, not by necessity, nor by accident, but out of his free goodness; again, not by an intermediate agent, but by his Word:

The supreme God has no need of anyone; He created all things and made all things by his Word, He did not need the help of the angels in order to create, nor of some Power inferior to Him and who was ignorant of the Father . . . ; but He himself, of Himself, in that nature which is beyond our speech and thought, predestined all things and made all things as He willed . . . ; and all that He made, He made by his indefatigable Word. For it is a characteristic of God's supreme eminence to have no need of external instruments in order to produce creatures; his own Word sufficed for all creation, as John the disciple of the Lord has said of Him: "All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing has been made" (II, ii, 4-5).

God's activity is his thought: "As soon as God conceived in his spirit, what He conceived was made" (II, iii, 2). He created freely, and out of nothing.¹⁴

This all-powerful God, supremely independent and transcendent in relation to every creature, is nevertheless not the unknown God imagined by the Gnostics: his creative work reveals Him:

How could the angels or the Demiurge be ignorant of the supreme God, seeing that they were in his domain, were themselves his creatures, and were contained by Him? Doubtless He might be invisible to them because of his transcendence; but He could not be unknown to them, because of his providence. They might indeed be, as the Gnostics say, infinitely distant from Him; but since his domain extends as far as them, they could not fail to know their Master, and could not be ignorant that He who created them is the Lord of all things. His nature is invisible but it is powerful, and it makes its all powerful and sovereign transcendence seen and keenly felt by every soul. Certainly, "no one knoweth the Father but the Son (nor the Son except the Father), and those to whom the Son has revealed Him." But there is one thing which all beings know, and the reason with which souls are endowed

¹⁴ "God has drawn from nothing all that exists, and has given existence to it as He has willed" (II, x, 2). "Freely and by his power He has made, disposed and finished all things, and the substance of all things is his will" (xxx, 9).

leads to this: it reveals to them that there is one God, the Lord of all things.¹⁵

This natural knowledge of God accorded to all men is very imperfect, but there is another kind of knowledge, infinitely more precious, of which the love of God is the source, and his gracious revelation the instrument:

If we think of his greatness and wonderful glory, no one can see God and live; for the Father is incomprehensible. But by virtue of his love, his condescension and his omnipotence, He grants to those who love Him the great gift of the vision of God, as the prophets have announced. For that which is impossible to men is possible to God. For man of himself sees not God; but God, because He wills it, is seen by men, by those whom He wills, when He wills, and as He wills, for God can do all things. He has revealed himself by the ministry of the Spirit, in a prophetic manner; He has revealed himself by the Incarnation of the Son, adoptively; and He will show himself in the kingdom of heaven paternally.¹⁶

Thus is overcome the difficulty which was insuperable for Hellenism and Gnosticism. Consumed with a desire to see God, Platonism strained itself in a vain effort to attain an ecstasy which exceeded its powers; Gnosticism on the other hand refused to the mass of humanity any access to God and granted it only to an élite, raised to this destiny by a privilege of nature. All these proud dreams fade away: no human philosophy can attain to the vision of God by its own efforts; no natural privilege can lay claim to it. Only God can invite us to it, and through his Son introduce mankind into the secret of his glory.

These exalted truths are the basis of our hope and also of our humility:

It is better and more useful to be simple and not very learned, and to be near to God by charity, than to appear very learned and clever and to blaspheme the Master. That is why Paul says: "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifies." Certainly he was not questioning the true knowledge of God—for he would be condemning himself—but he knew that some were puffed up under the pretext of knowledge, and were losing the love of God. . . . It is therefore better to know nothing, and to be ignorant of the cause of that which exists, at the same time

¹⁵ II, vi, 1. Also II, xxvii, 2; III, xxv, 1; IV, vi, 6. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 528 et seq.

¹⁶ IV, xx, 5. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 534.

believing in God and persevering in his love, rather than to boast of this knowledge and to fall away from this love which gives life; it is better to sacrifice all other scientific enquiry in order to know only Jesus Christ, the Son of God, crucified for us, rather than to be led astray into impiety by subtle and trifling questions (II, xxvi, 1).

This passage completes and throws light on those we have already quoted, and enables us to understand better the mind of Irenæus on this grave and delicate question of the relations between scientific research and the faith. His prudence is always calculated, and keeps him from any pusillanimity or any excessive mistrust; he is careful to repeat that there is a true knowledge of God, and that St. Paul is in this matter a model. At the same time he realises that there are around him so many temerarious pretensions that his efforts are directed to restraining pride rather than to encouraging research. Soon afterwards, the Alexandrian masters Clement and Origen, influenced by other preoccupations, will take up again the same problem, and will throw a different light upon it. Their noble endeavours will not always be free from temerity, yet their efforts will not be sterile, and the Church will know how to control and regulate them.¹⁷

For the rest, the humility which Irenæus requires in the Christian is not inertia, but on the contrary a persevering enquiry under the guidance of God our Master, so that not only here below but also in the next world, "God has always something to teach, and man always something to learn from Him" (II, xxviii, 3).

The Sources of the Faith: The Gospel

In the two books which we have just examined, Irenæus has carried on a close controversy with the Gnostics: he has first set forth their systems, and then opposed to them the truth of the Christian faith, insisting above all on the fundamental doctrine of the existence of God and of the knowledge, natural or supernatural, which we can have of Him.

Influenced probably by the success of these first two books,

¹⁷ Cf. Bk. IV, ch. xxviii, § 2. This other passage of Irenæus should also be read (*Adversus haereses*, II): "Since we have in the rule of faith the truth itself, and a manifest testimony concerning God, we must not pass from one explanation to another and abandon the firm and true knowledge of God, but rather we must submit all our explanations to this norm, exercise ourselves in the study of the mystery and real plan of God, and progress in the love of Him who made us and who constantly makes so many things."

Irenæus decided to explain in greater detail the sources of the Christian revelation, thus giving us the first outline of Fundamental Theology known in the history of the Church. Belonging as it does to the last years of the second century, and emanating from a master who transmitted to us the whole tradition of Asia, Rome, and Gaul, it is of the greatest interest.

The first document for the Christian is the Gospel, and accordingly Irenæus makes it the first subject of his study:

Matthew lived among the Hebrews, and wrote the Gospel in their language, and published it when Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and founding the Church. After their death, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, likewise transmitted to us in writing the teachings of Peter. Luke, the companion of Paul, in his turn set forth in a book the teachings of Paul. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned on his bosom, also published a Gospel, when he was living at Ephesus in Asia¹⁸ (III, i, 1, 844).

Chronological indications are of secondary importance for Irenæus: what is important is the exclusive authority of the four gospels, with the witness they render to the one God. He represents them as completely independent of each other, alone regarded as canonical, and already the subject of study bringing out their profound agreement and their differences. In the case of the Gospel of St. John, this testimony has a particular value, in view of its origin.¹⁹

After the Gospels, Irenæus studies the preaching of the apostles, as narrated in the Acts. He points out that St. Paul did not preach a faith different from that of the apostles in Jerusalem: all taught one God and one Saviour.

Tradition

While he is thus studying the Scriptures, the Bishop of Lyons invokes also the tradition of the Church. He is led to do so by his opponents themselves:

¹⁸ On this text and the commentaries to which it has given rise, cf. L. de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 221-225; Lagrange, *Saint Luc*, pp. xxv-xxvii.

¹⁹ Cf. A. Camerlinck, *Saint Irénée et le canon du Nouveau Testament*, Louvain, 1886; J. Labourt, *De la valeur du témoignage d'Irénée dans la question johannique*, in *Revue Biblique*, Vol. VII, 1898, pp. 59-73; F. S. Gutjahr, *Die Glaubwürdigkeit des Irenäischen Zeugnisses über die Abfassung des vierten Evangeliums*, Graz, 1904; Lagrange, *Histoire ancienne du canon du Nouveau Testament*, pp. 46 et seq.

When we confound them by the Scriptures, they begin to accuse the Scriptures in themselves, saying they are erroneous, that they are without authority, that they do not agree, and that we cannot find the truth in them if we ignore tradition. For they say that it is not by the Scriptures that the truth has been transmitted, but by the living voice. . . . But when we make appeal ourselves to this tradition which has come from the Apostles, and which the presbyters succeeding to others have retained in the churches, they oppose tradition, saying that, being wiser not only than the presbyters but also than the apostles, they have themselves found the pure truth. . . . And thus they agree neither with Scripture nor with Tradition (III, ii, 1-2).²⁰

To convict these slippery opponents of error, it was necessary to establish the existence of an incontestable tradition universally recognised. Irenæus finds the guarantee of this in the regular succession of the bishops who, by their origin, are lawfully linked with the apostles, and through the apostles with Christ:

The tradition of the apostles is manifest in the whole world; it needs only be examined in any church by one who wishes to know the truth. We can number the bishops who were instituted by the apostles and their successors down to ourselves; they taught nothing and knew nothing resembling these follies. But as it would take too long to transcribe here the successions of the bishops of all the churches, we will consider the greatest and most ancient, known by all, founded and established at Rome by the two very glorious apostles Peter and Paul: we will show that the tradition which it received from the apostles and the faith it has preached to men have come down to us through the succession of bishops; we will thus confound all those who, in whatever way, through self-satisfaction, vainglory, blindness or error, gather in a way other than they should.²¹

For with this church, because of the authority of its origin, every church ought to agree, that is, all the faithful from everywhere; and it is in it that the tradition which comes from the apostles has been conserved by these faithful (III, iii, 1-2).²²

²⁰ Cf. Van den Eynde, *Les normes de l'enseignement chrétien*, 1933, pp. 159 et seq.

²¹ "Praeterquam oportet colligunt." Massuet sees in the word "colligunt" a reference to heretical conventicles. But we think it is rather an echo of the words of the Lord: "He who gathereth not with me, scattereth."

²² Cf. Van den Eynde, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-179.

[As in other extracts from the Fathers, I have followed Père Lebreton's translation here. A stronger translation could well be justified. In view of the importance of the text, I give the Latin original of the concluding portion: "Ad hanc enim Ecclesiam, propter potentiorum principatatem necesse est omnem convenire Eccle-

Irenæus next gives the catalogue of the bishops of Rome from the apostles' time: Linus, Anacletus, Clement: here he stops to bring out the authority of this witness of the apostolic preaching, and the force of his testimony given in his letter to the Corinthians. Then come Evaristus, Alexander, Sixtus, Telesphorus, the glorious martyr Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter, and finally Eleutherius. After the Roman church, Irenæus turns to the churches of Asia, so closely linked with the apostles, and which he himself knew so well, and lastly to the churches established among the barbarians. "These have neither paper nor ink, but salvation is written in their hearts by the Spirit, and they diligently keep the old tradition."

In presence of these manifest proofs, there is no need to go and seek the truth elsewhere: it is easy to receive it from the Church. . . . And if some little question should lead to a discussion, should we not have recourse to the oldest churches, those in which the apostles lived, and in the matter under discussion receive from them a certain and manifest doctrine? And if the apostles had not left us the Scriptures, would it not have been necessary to follow the order of the tradition they had entrusted to those to whom they confided the churches? (III, iv, 1).

siam, hoc est eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his qui sunt undique conservata est ea quae est ab apostolis traditio." "Propter potentiorē principatū" signifies not merely "authority," but rather "more powerful authority." Keble, in the *Oxford Library of the Fathers*, translates: "on account of its higher original," referring back to the foundation by "two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul." Dr. Kidd adopts Montgomery Hitchcock's translation: "Unto this church, which holds a leading position among the churches." Bishop Gore translates: "on account of her superior pre-eminence." Abbot Chapman translates: "on account of its more powerful principality." Bishop Gore followed Langen in explaining the "superior pre-eminence" as due to the civil position of Rome rather than to its church. But this does violence to the context, and Chapman points out that even Pullar, who adopted this version at first in his *Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, abandoned it in his third edition. It is also rejected by Dr. Bright. The more powerful position of the Roman church is obviously the result of its foundation by SS. Peter and Paul. With this church, all others must agree; or alternatively, to this church all others must have recourse—the precise meaning of *convenire ad* is disputed. Keble translates: "the whole church must needs agree with this church." Dr. Kidd: "unto this church must needs resort every church"; Gore: "to this church it must needs be that every church should come together"; Chapman: "To this Church it is necessary that every Church should come together (agree)." A full discussion will be found in the article *Irénée* in *Dict. de Théol. Catholique*. The best treatments in English are those of Chapman, *Bishop Gore and the Catholic Claims*, p. 64, Fortescue, *The Early Papacy*, and S. H. Scott, *The Eastern Churches and the Papacy*, pp. 36 et seq. See also Jalland, *The Church and the Papacy*, 1944, pp. 109-115.—[Tr.]

This passage is worthy of special attention, and it has been the subject of much study.²³ The central idea is the decisive value of the testimony of the Church as a faithful echo of the teaching of the apostles; the guarantee of this fidelity is the episcopal succession which links the bishops of the present time to the apostles. This testimony can be seen everywhere, and Irenæus is not afraid to invoke the judgment of the churches of the barbarians. But by preference we must go to the most ancient churches, more closely linked to the apostles: Ephesus, Smyrna, and above all, the church of Rome. Leaving aside discussions concerning points of detail, we can say with Duchesne: "It is difficult to find a clearer expression (a) of doctrinal unity in the universal Church; (b) the unique and supreme importance of the Roman church as the witness, guardian and organ of apostolic tradition; (c) of its high pre-eminence in the Christian community as a whole."²⁴

In the matter of the barbarian churches, we notice that the form of the argument varies. Irenæus here emphasises not only the apostolic succession but also the fruits of sanctity produced by the Spirit in the Church. This argument had already been used by St. Paul;²⁵ Irenæus, although emphasising the visible aspect of the Church, does not lose sight of the invisible, and inner life of the Spirit. He returns to this at the end of the book:

We have shown that the teaching of the Church is everywhere and always the same, and that it is based on the witness of the prophets, apostles and all the disciples. . . . We have received this faith from the Church; it is like a precious deposit in an excellent vessel; the Church renews it unceasingly and communicates its youth to the vessel

²³ Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, pp. 249-253, and the previous works there mentioned (Harnack, Funk, Chapman, Boehmer); Roiron, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. VIII, 1917, pp. 36-51.

²⁴ Duchesne, *Eglises séparées*, p. 119, quoted by Batiffol, *op. cit.*, p. 252. We notice that the three groups whose testimony is invoked by Irenæus represent the churches with which he was connected during the three periods of his life, Asia, Rome and Gaul. This does not in any way lessen the significance of the passage: personal memories may have guided him, but they do not govern his judgment. The unrivalled importance he attributes to the Roman church is not the result of his impressions or of his memories: if that were the case he would doubtless give more weight to the testimony of Smyrna, which was the place of his Christian formation, and which was more immediately linked with the apostles, for between it and them there was only one intermediary, Polycarp. Yet Smyrna comes only in the second place, and does not occupy in his argument the unique position which he gives to Rome.

²⁵ II Cor., iii, 2.

containing it. It is the gift of God entrusted to the Church, it communicates the Spirit to God's creature so that all the members who participate in it are vivified; and therein consists communion with Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit, the pledge of incorruptibility, foundation of our faith, and the ladder which enables us to ascend to God. For it is written: "In the Church God has established apostles, prophets, doctors, and every operation of the Spirit"; those people do not share in it who do not come to the Church but deprive themselves of life by their perverse minds and their evil works. For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace, and the Spirit is truth. Thus, those who do not belong to her do not receive from her maternal breasts the food of life, and do not drink from the pure fountain which springs from the body of Christ, but they dig out from earthly ditches broken cisterns, and drink putrid water; they flee from the faith of the Church which would guide them, and reject the Spirit which would teach them (III, xxiv, 1).

Thus the exigencies of controversy do not make Irenæus forget the inner life and perpetual youth which the Holy Spirit fosters in the Church. On the contrary, it is this profound theological intuition that gives to the controversy its chief significance. Tradition consists not merely in the perpetuity of the testimony which, by the regular succession of the bishops, goes back to the apostles and to Christ; it is this living chain, this testimony of the Spirit, that witnesses to and assures our union with Christ, not only by faithful acceptance of his doctrine, but also by the communication of his life. This deep truth will be less apparent in Tertullian; in him the theology of tradition will retain all its juridical force; it will be in the hands of controversialists a powerful weapon against heresy, but it will no longer deal with the inmost source of the love of a Christian for the Church.²⁰

The Progressive Education of Humanity

We ought now to study in the books of Irenæus the deposit of faith entrusted by Christ to the Church and unceasingly vivified by the Spirit. We cannot, however, follow it out here in all its

²⁰ Batiffol (*L'Eglise naissante*, p. 239) gives this appreciation of the theology of Irenæus: "While refuting Gnostic errors, he outlines the theory of the Church and her doctrinal office with a fullness and firmness which make the third book in particular a veritable treatise on the Church, and the earliest one we possess."

development;²⁷ but we must at least mention the important thesis which dominates the whole of the anti-Marcionite controversy. The *Antitheses* of Marcion could be refuted effectively by showing from texts of Christ or St. Paul that the Law and the Gospel are in agreement. Irenæus does this more than once, and Tertullian will lay yet more stress on it, but this refutation, while it silenced the opponent, did not altogether satisfy the Christian: all through the Old Testament, and still more in comparison with the New, we find a remarkable religious advance and a great transformation. How is this to be explained? Why did not the God of the Jews reveal to them what He said later on to Christians, if in fact the God of the Jews is the God of the Christians?

To this pressing question, Irenæus replies in the course of his fourth book, by explaining the divine plan, which has gradually and patiently brought about the education of the human race. "Why did God not create man at the beginning in a state of perfection?" The heretics appeal to the weakness of their Demiurge, who was not able to make a finished work; that is an impiety, for God is almighty. At the same time the creature, because he is a creature, is necessarily imperfect, and must be led by degrees to perfection. That is how a child grows, and how an imperfect Christian is perfected,²⁸ and in the same way the human race as a whole has had to improve progressively, under the divine influence. From the creation, the end which God aimed at was to make man to his own image and likeness; his whole providential education tends towards this distant terminus:

It is by this education that man, produced and created, conforms himself gradually to the image and likeness of the unproduced God. The Father chooses and orders, the Son works and creates, the Spirit feeds and augments, and man gently progresses and ascends towards perfection, that is, comes nearer to the unproduced God; for He who is not produced is perfect, and this is God. It was necessary that man should first be created and then grow, then become an (adult) man, then multiply, then develop his powers, then arrive at glory, and that arriving at glory he should see his Master. For it is God that he must

²⁷ On the doctrine of the Trinity in Irenæus, cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 517-617.

²⁸ Irenæus here has in mind the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "I have given you milk, not solid food, for you could not yet receive the latter." Cf. IV, xxxviii, 2.

see, and the sight of God makes him incorruptible, and incorruptibility makes one very close to God (IV, xxxviii, 3).

Understood in this elevated way, and in this divine light, the whole history of mankind takes shape and becomes clear. God created us through love; He had no need of man:

He did not form Adam because He needed him, but in order to have someone to receive his benefits; and if He tells us to follow Him, it is not because He has need of our services, but because He desires to save us, for to follow the Saviour is to share in salvation, to follow the light is to live in the light, and those who are in the light do not illumine the light but are illumined by it. . . . Thus, at the beginning God formed man out of love; He chose the patriarchs in order to save them; He taught an intractable people to follow God, He raised up on earth prophets to accustom man to carry the Spirit and to be in communion with God; He himself had need of no one, but to those who have need of Him he offered the grace of being in communion with Him. . . . and in innumerable ways He worked on the human race in order to make it apt for salvation. That is why St. John says in the *Apocalypse*: "His voice is as the voice of the great waters." Truly the Spirit resembles the great waters, for it is rich, and the Father is great. And the Word goes amongst all these men, filling with good things those who submit to Him, and giving to the whole creation a law worthy of it (IV, xiv, 1-2).

The Law

Hence this law is not the work of a blind Demiurge, and the good God did not come to abrogate it: it prepared men for the coming of Christ. Hence what Jesus required from those who wished to follow Him was in the first place to keep the commandments and then to leave all things and follow him (IV, xii, 5). In the Sermon on the Mount, He did not abolish the Law, but completed it by setting forth a more internal and more perfect justice:

For the Law, written for slaves, formed the soul from without, by fastening on the body and drawing the soul as by a chain to obey the commandments so that man might learn to serve God. The Word has delivered the soul, and has thereby taught the body voluntarily to purify itself. In doing this He had to remove from man the chains of slavery which he was accustomed to bear, and teach him to serve God without chains. But it was also necessary that the commandments of

liberty should extend our subjection to our King, so that no one should go backwards or show himself unworthy of his liberator; and children should display towards the Father of the family as much piety and obedience as did the slaves, but also a still greater trust, inasmuch as free activity is more noble and more glorious than servile submission (IV, xiii, 2).²⁹

The Divine Action upon Man

These beautiful words, directly based upon St. Paul, bring out the tremendous advantages of the new covenant and of the liberty of the children of God, but without detriment to the Law. There is no antithesis between them, but a progressive education, planned by God from the beginning, and continually carried out by Him: "The two Testaments are therefore the work of one and the same Father of the family, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who conversed with Abraham and Moses, and who in the new covenant has restored liberty to us and made grace superabound" (IV, ix, 1).

From the time of creation, the heavenly Father carried on his work not by subordinate agents but "by himself, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit,"³⁰ who are, as Irenæus often calls them, the two "hands" of the Father.³¹ On the day of creation, the Father made man by the Word and the Spirit, and has never abandoned him. "Adam was not able to flee from the hands of God" (V, i, 3), and "at the end of time, the Word of God, uniting himself to the old substance from which Adam was formed, produced a living and perfect man who was united to the perfect Father" (*Ibid.*).

Hence, whether we consider the creation of man or his sanctification, the divine work was carried out by the common action of the three Persons:

²⁹ Cf. *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, xevi.

³⁰ "Fecit ea per semetipsum, hoc est per Verbum et Sapientiam suam" (II, xxx, 9). Cf. IV, xx, 1: "Hence the angels did not form us: the angels could not make an image of God. Only the Word of the Lord could do this, not a power removed from the Father of the universe. And God had no need of them in order to make what He had decided to make, for He was not without his own hands. He had always with him the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by which and in which He made all things freely and spontaneously. It was to them that He spoke when He said: 'Let us make man in our image and likeness.'" We note here the identification of wisdom with the Holy Spirit, a feature in which St. Irenæus resembles his contemporary St. Theophilus. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 567 et seq.

³¹ On this expression, cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 579 et seq.

God is intelligent, and accordingly He has made all creatures by the Word. God is a spirit, and so He has embellished all things by the Spirit. The Word lays the foundation, that is, labours to give to a being its substance, and adorns it with existence, and the Spirit ensures for these different forces their forms and beauty (*Demonstration*, V).

Thus the incarnation of the Son has prepared us to receive the Spirit of God:

The Lord came to us, not according to the whole measure of his power, but so that we should be able to see Him. He could indeed have come to us in his incorruptible glory, but we could not as yet bear the greatness of his glory. That is why He, the perfect bread of the Father, has given Himself to us as to little children, under the form of milk. This was his presence according to man. He desired that, being nourished by the breasts of his flesh, and accustomed by this food to eat and drink the Word of God, we might be able to assimilate to ourselves the bread of immortality, which is the Spirit of the Father (IV, xxxviii, 1).

The divine action thus appears to us as coming down to us from the Father by the Son and in the Spirit. If we consider it as it is in ourselves, we attain first to the Spirit, who reveals to us the Son and takes us to Him, then the Son takes us to the Father.³²

All this is as yet uncompleted here below; the divine work continues, tending always to the same end, forming man to the image and likeness of God.³³ Of this transformation we possess as yet only

³² "The presbyters, disciples of the apostles, thus describe the progress of those who are saved, and the stages of their ascent: By the Spirit they ascend to the Son, and by the Son to the Father, and lastly, the Son gives up his work to the Father, as the apostle has said" (V, xxxvi, 8). This twofold aspect of the divine action is well brought out in a beautiful passage in the *Demonstration*, vii: "When we are regenerated by baptism, which is given us in the name of these three Persons, we are enriched in this second birth with the good things which are in God the Father, by the means of his Son with the Holy Spirit. For all those who have within themselves the Spirit of God are led to the Word, that is, to the Son; and the Son takes them and presents them to his Father, and the Father communicates incorruptibility to them. Hence, without the Spirit we cannot see the Word of God, and without the Son one cannot reach the Father, for the knowledge of the Father is the Son, and the knowledge of the Son of God is obtained only by means of the Holy Spirit. It is the Son who, by office, distributes the Spirit, according to the good pleasure of the Father, to those whom the Father wishes and as the Father wishes."

³³ "The nature had to appear first, then the mortal element had to be overcome and absorbed by the immortal, the corruptible by the incorruptible, and man had to become conformed to the image and likeness of God" (IV, xxxviii, 4). "By the effusion of the Spirit man becomes spiritual and perfect, and he is indeed in the

a pledge in the Spirit, which dwells within us and makes us spiritual, "the mortal element being absorbed by immortality," and which makes us groan and cry to the Father:

Thus if, having received this pledge, we now cry: "Abba, Father," what will it be when we rise again and see Him face to face, when all the members, running together, sing the hymn of triumph in honour of Him who has raised them from the dead and has given them life eternal? For if already the pledge, taking hold of man and assimilating him to Himself, makes him cry, "Abba, Father," what will be the effect of the whole grace of the Spirit, given to men by God? It will make us like to Him, it will render us perfect according to the will of the Father; for it will make man to the image and likeness of God (V, viii, 1).⁸⁴

The Theology of St. Irenæus

This brief outline will have enabled us to grasp the character of the theology of St. Irenæus. It appears in the first place as a work of controversy, but very soon the great doctor frees himself from his polemical preoccupations; he contemplates the truth in itself and raises his readers up to it. In its great light one forgets the ambitious constructions of Basilides and Valentine and the anti-theses of Marcion. It is this which gives to the theological work of St. Irenæus a vitality which has defied the lapse of years. The teaching of the Church, as he describes it, appears indeed as a "precious deposit placed in an excellent vessel; the Spirit ever renews its youth, and communicates its youth to the vessel containing it."

The Salvation of the Flesh

There is a last aspect of this great work which remains to be considered. We have seen how the Spirit sanctifies us and prepares us for the vision of God. But man is not only a soul; he is also a body. Ought we to regard the body only as an evil principle,

image and likeness of God. But if in some man the Spirit is not united to his soul, that man is imperfect, he remains animal and carnal. He has indeed in his flesh the image of God, but he does not receive His likeness by the Spirit" (V, vi, 1).

⁸⁴ On this sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit, cf. A. d'Alès, *La doctrine de l'Esprit en saint Irénée*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XIV, 1924, pp. 497-538; cf. also *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 604-614.

incapable of salvation? Such was the Gnostic error; Irenæus rejects it with all his force in the fifth and last book of his work.

Those people are vain who despise the whole creation of God, who deny that the flesh can be saved, who disdain its regeneration and maintain that it is incapable of incorruptibility. If the flesh is not saved, then the Lord has not redeemed us with his blood, and the Eucharistic chalice is not the communion of his blood, and the bread which we break is not the communion of his body. It cannot be blood if it comes not from the veins and flesh and human substance which truly became the Word of God. But "He has redeemed us by his blood," as his apostle has said . . . we are his members, and are nourished by his creature, and He has given us this creature, making his sun to rise, and showering down rain according to his will. And the chalice which comes from his creature is affirmed by Him to be his blood, and by it He nourishes our own blood. Likewise the bread which comes from creation He affirms to be his body, by which He nourishes our own body. Seeing that the mingled chalice and the bread that has been made receive the word of God and become the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, which nourishes and preserves the substance of our flesh, how can it be maintained that the flesh which is nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ and is his member, is not susceptible of the grace of God which is eternal life? (V, ii, 2).

We see in this beautiful passage that the Catholic theology of the flesh is based upon the whole Christian doctrine. Creation, Incarnation, and the Eucharist—all these high doctrines repeat that the flesh, the work of God, united to the Son of God the food and source of supernatural life, cannot be the essentially evil principle despised and condemned by the Gnostics. We also see how the doctrines thus invoked give an unshakable foundation to the faith, and this must be because they were themselves not questioned. This observation is particularly important in the matter of the doctrine of the Eucharist. At that date, and for long after the time of Irenæus,³⁵ this doctrine was beyond all controversy, and that not because of indifference, but because of its certainty.³⁶

From all this Irenæus infers that the flesh is capable of being

³⁵ The first controversies will appear ten centuries later, at the time of Berengarius.

³⁶ In addition to the passage just given, Irenæus deals elsewhere also with the Eucharistic doctrine, and always in the same definite way: IV, xvii, 1; xviii, 3-4, xxxiii, 2. [St. Irenæus teaches in Lib. iv, c. 17, that the Eucharist is a sacrifice, calling it the Oblation of the New Testament, and "the oblation of the Church."
—Tr.]

saved: if not, the Word of God would not have become flesh (V, xiv, 1). Doubtless the flesh can be doomed to corruption, and condemned to eternal death, but it can also rise again to an incorruptible life.

Millenarianism

The book concludes with a study of the Last Things. In these last five chapters, Irenæus's theology, elsewhere always so measured and prudent, follows Papias into millenarian dreams: ³⁷ before the Last Judgment, the just will reign with Christ here below for a thousand years.

This belief, widespread in Jewish eschatology, was in the eyes of many Christians authorised by the descriptions in the *Apocalypse* of St. John. In ch. xx-xxii of this book, we read how Christ will triumph: the devil will be chained up for a thousand years and shut up in the abyss, then the martyrs will rise again and reign with Christ for a thousand years. Afterwards Satan will come forth from his prison, seduce the nations, send them forth against Christ, and will be finally defeated by God. We read also that the heavenly Jerusalem will descend to the earth, clothed with the light of God. Adopting these symbols, which were familiar to his readers, St. John gave them a spiritual significance which went beyond the Jewish dreams. But in the course of the second century, some Christians were deceived thereby, and understood these thousand years of Messianic felicity in a literal sense.

This error was prevalent among the heretics, as for instance in Cerinthus, who gave it its grossest and most obviously Jewish form.³⁸ We find it also in Papias, a presbyter much attached to the Church and to tradition.³⁹ Justin, in his *Dialogue* (LXXX), while

³⁷ On Millenarianism, cf. L. Gry, *Le Millénarisme dans ses origines et son développement*, Paris, 1904.

³⁸ Gaius, writing in Rome at the commencement of the third century, speaks thus of the doctrine: "Cerinthus says that, after the resurrection, Christ will reign on the earth, the flesh will live again in Jerusalem, and will there serve the passions and pleasures. An enemy of the divine Scriptures, he wishes to deceive mankind, and says that there will be a thousand years of wedding feasts" (quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, III, xxviii, 2). Similar statement in Dionysius of Alexandria, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxv, 3.

³⁹ Irenæus, *Adv. haereses*, V, xxxiii, 3-4. "The presbyters who saw John the disciple of the Lord say that they heard him set forth thus the teaching of the Lord concerning the Last Things: There shall come days when vines will grow having each ten thousand stems, and on each stem ten thousand branches, and on each

allowing that others do not hold these doctrines, affirms that many Christians, and all those who are "completely orthodox," believe as he does in the reign of a thousand years. Irenæus goes farther still: reacting against the allegorical exegesis so much abused by the Gnostics, he adheres to the literal interpretation, and holds that this cannot be abandoned without endangering the faith.⁴⁰ His authority will influence Tertullian and St. Hippolytus.⁴¹

Nevertheless, even in the second century, Millenarianism, though widespread, was not universally accepted.⁴² We do not find it in any formula of faith; its absence is noticeable in Roman works other than Justin—e.g. in those of Clement and Hermas;⁴³ and, what is still more remarkable, we do not find it in the other work of Irenæus, the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*. Here the description of the Last Things (ch. lxi) is based on an allegorical exegesis, and no longer on the literal interpretation of the *Apocalypse* as was the case in the *Adversus haereses*.⁴⁴

From the beginning of the third century, Millenarianism began to lose ground. In Rome it was warmly attacked by Gaius; at Alexandria it was refuted by Origen, and thirty years later by the bishop, St. Dionysius. In the fourth century it was regarded by the

branch ten thousand twigs, and on each twig ten thousand bunches of grapes, and in each bunch ten thousand berries, and each berry when crushed will give twenty-five measures of wine. And when some one of the saints shall gather a cluster of grapes, another will say to him: 'I am better, gather me and through me bless the Lord.' In the same way a grain of wheat shall produce ten thousand spikes, and each spike shall bear ten thousand grains, and each grain shall give ten pounds of fine flower; and the other fruits, seeds, and herbs shall be just as fruitful, according to their species, and all the animals using this nourishment, produced by the earth, shall live together in peace and unity, and shall be completely subjected to mankind. Such is the testimony of Papias, the disciple of John the companion of Polycarp and an old man; he has written it in the fourth of his five books."

⁴⁰ *Adv. haereses*, V, xxxi, 1; V, xxxv, 1.

⁴¹ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, IV, xxxix. In two works which have not come down to us, Tertullian set forth the same hopes: *De spe fidelium*, *De Paradiso*. So also Hippolytus, *De Christo et antichristo*; *Capita adversus Gaium*. Cf. D'Alès, *La Théologie de saint Hippolyte*, p. 198. We find the same theses at the beginning of the fourth century in St. Methodius, *Banquet*, IX, v.

⁴² Gry (*op. cit.*, p. 66) thinks that one can "perhaps" find traces of Millenarianism in the prayers of the *Didache*, x, 5. He adds: "The author of this little work is moreover a convinced upholder of the twofold resurrection, and seems to echo reminiscences of *Apocalypse*, xvi, 6-8."

⁴³ Cf. Gry, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁴⁴ Cf. Lebreton in *Revue de l'Institut catholique de Paris*, Vol. XII, 1907, pp. 140-142. Harnack (*op. cit.*, p. 62) says that the two works show that Irenæus changed his opinion. Tixeront and Armitage Robinson do not think so: see their notes on this passage.

Cappadocians and by St. Jerome and St. Augustine as an opinion definitively abandoned.⁴⁵

The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching

In connection with Millenarianism, we have just mentioned a small work by St. Irenæus, the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*. For a long time this work was known only as one mentioned by Eusebius. But an Armenian version was discovered in 1904, and it was published for the first time in 1907.⁴⁶

A later work than the *Adversus haereses*, which it quotes (ch. xcix), this treatise is not so important as its predecessor. On the subject of the Last Things it seems to correct it; at least it sets forth a more prudent and more reserved doctrine. But that is the only feature which distinguishes it from the larger work.⁴⁷ This little book is precious to us, for it shows us the bishop of Lyons not now as a controversialist and a doctor, but as a catechist, expounding to all, and especially to the faithful, the Christian faith and its proofs.⁴⁸

Importance of the Theological Work of St. Irenæus

Our very rapid study of Irenæus will at least have given a glimpse of the exceptional richness of his work. Harnack has well said that if Tertullian provided Catholic theology with a good number of formulæ, it was above all Irenæus who gave it its content.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Cf. Bardy, art. *Millénarisme*, in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, Vol. X, cols. 1762-1763.

⁴⁶ The various editions have been mentioned above, p. 661, n. 1.

⁴⁷ We may also mention the idea of the seven heavens, which savours of Jewish literature, especially the *Ascension of Isaias* (cf. *Revue de l'Institut catholique*, Vol. XII, 1907, pp. 136-139; Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 77, cf. p. 41); the archangel who commands on the earth is similar to the "venerable angel" in Hermas (cf. *Revue de l'Institut catholique*, Vol. XII, 1907, p. 139). These are only secondary features, but they give the impression of a popular tradition.

⁴⁸ This short work is also indebted to the *Apologies*, and especially that of Justin Martyr; cf. Armitage Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-23.

⁴⁹ *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 556. We may also recall the opinion of Zahn (*op. cit.*, p. 410): "Irenæus . . . did not set himself forth as a philosopher, or even as a teacher of a 'barbarian philosophy' like the apologists from Aristides to Clement. But how he surpasses them in firmness of judgment, vigour of thought, and clarity of expression! Irenæus is the first writer of the post-apostolic age who

We shall find quite often in the course of the history of the Church that the great doctors, not content with refuting heretics, have turned controversy into a new source of truth. It suffices here to mention the names of St. Athanasius, the Cappadocians, and above all St. Augustine. Irenæus belongs to the same category. In order to oppose his adversaries who endeavour to destroy the edifice of Christian dogma, he does not content himself with repulsing their attacks, but he raises still higher than his predecessors the walls of the glorious city, and ensures with greater care their solidity and cohesion.

In the first place he gives a deeper foundation to dogma itself, by fixing the relations between faith and theology, and the conditions of our knowledge of God; then he studies the sources of the Christian revelation, Scripture and Tradition, the magisterium of the Church, and the great Christian truths, namely the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption, and the Last Things. All these studies are carried on with a vigour and a prudence which we shall rarely find in so high a degree or so constantly combined. Thus, in the question of the relation between the common faith and learned theology, Irenæus endeavours above all to ensure by a filial docility communion with the Church, in which the Christian finds the gifts of the Spirit and union with Christ. In the obscurity of the present life he prefers charity to speculation; and yet he is very careful to promote theological study and opens up to it an immense field of research. On the subject to Tradition, he is careful to go back to the apostles and through them to Christ by means of the episcopal succession; but he insists quite as much on the witness of the Spirit which vivifies the body of Christ and unceasingly renews its youth. In the theology of salvation, he brings out into full light the fruit of the Incarnation, the Son of God recapitulating and renewing all things in Himself,⁵⁰ and repeats that Christ has re-

can be called a theologian. If it is true that a diligent study of the manifold elements and sources of the Christian faith, such as distinguished Eusebius and Jerome, does not suffice to constitute a theologian, but that there is also required a synthetic and harmonious conception of the relations between God and the world, based on the special principles of the Christian faith, then the only ones who can be compared with Irenæus are Origen and Augustine. Neither Athanasius nor Cyril can be compared with these three men, and in disengaging theology from all extraneous influences, Irenæus surpasses them all."

⁵⁰ On "recapitulation" in the Christology of St. Irenæus, cf. D'Alès, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. VI, 1916, pp. 185-211.

deemed us by his blood. His theology of the Trinity is the firmest and richest we find in the ante-Nicene Fathers.⁵¹ Against the heresies of Marcion and the Gnostics it vindicates with great force the unity of God, but at the same time it heralds the Greek theology of the divine Persons, describing their personal part in creation and in revelation. Then, after contemplating the divine activity, which comes from the Father through the Son in the Spirit, it takes us back from the Spirit through the Son to the Father by the "recapitulation" which Pope St. Dionysius in the third century will set forth in his letter to the Alexandrians, adopting the ideas and even the terminology of Irenæus.⁵²

If we ask whence Irenæus derived his wide understanding of the great theological ideas, we must answer that the source was his respect and love for Tradition as a whole. He was in no way a partisan, nor did he belong to a school: his school was the Church, his party that of Christ. He venerated St. Polycarp and Papias, the presbyters of Asia, and equally St. Justin, the apologist-philosopher; every part of the Bible was sacred to him and familiar to him; the history of the patriarchs, the books of the prophets, the psalms, the sapiential books; the doctrine of St. Paul, so little stressed by the writers of the second century, is brought out in full relief by him, and similarly also the Gospel of St. John, which is usually kept in the background by the apologists.

This broad outlook and comprehensive mind which is manifested in the works of the bishop of Lyons is in harmony with his life: he was at once an Asiatic, a Roman, and bishop of Gaul; he combined all these in the wide charity of a truly Catholic soul. It was as an ambassador of peace that he was sent to Rome by the confessors of Lyons; it was also as a peacemaker that he intervened some twelve years later in the Easter quarrel.⁵³ The Church has remembered this with thankfulness: she celebrates in Irenæus the controversialist who destroyed heresies, the missionary and pastor who evangelised the French, but above all she delights to see in him the peacemaker who allayed the conflicts between Rome and Asia.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 540-615.

⁵² Cf. Bk. IV, ch. xxvi, § 1. On this twofold aspect, the divine activity which descends to us and the sanctification which raises us up to God, see above, p. 538.

⁵³ Cf. *infra*, p. 724.

⁵⁴ Eusebius already wrote: "Irenæus rightly bore his name, and was a peacemaker in his actions, who counselled and preached for the peace of the churches. He wrote not only to Victor, but to many heads of churches to give them the same counsel relating to the question discussed" (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 18).

§ 2. CANONICAL LEGISLATION AND THE ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHY

Development of Discipline

The study of St. Irenæus has brought before us the theological effort of the Catholic Church in its struggle against heresy. But it was not enough to assure the correctness of belief, it was also necessary to tighten the bonds which united Christians with each other and with the Church, and then, by a more careful selection and a more detailed preparation, to assure so far as was possible the constancy of those who presented themselves for baptism. With these preoccupations in mind we find the Church in the last years of the second and the early years of the third centuries examining with greater strictness those who desired to join her, and forming them by a more rigorous discipline. We find the same increased care manifested towards Christians, by a greater uniformity in the liturgy, and by partly new canonical laws concerning penance. About the same time the clergy were organised in a more complete manner, and we find besides bishops, priests and deacons, other "sub-deacons" and lesser clerics. Attempts were also made to determine with greater precision the canon of Scripture, and the rules concerning Tradition.

This great effort of canonical legislation was manifest above all at Rome, but it was found also throughout the Church as a whole. And while each community was improving its organisation, it became more closely linked with the other Christian communities, and with the Roman Church, the centre of unity.

The Organisation of the Local Churches

In this part of our study, we must not look for a new constitution, or a code of Canon Law, comprising a collection of decrees which call only for commentaries. In these early years of Christianity reforms were not enacted by a legislator by specific decrees: they were enshrined in texts which testified to them but did not precisely initiate them. Thus we find at the beginning of the third century at Rome and at Carthage laws governing the catechumenate, and also a "discipline of the secret" which were nowhere found in the

second century.¹ These two institutions were closely linked, and must be studied together.

The Catechumenate

If we seek in the first place the influences or preoccupations which led to this new legislation,² we shall find these mainly in the conditions of life in the Church, its rapid propagation, the persecutions she underwent, and the dangers presented everywhere by the seductions of heresy.

During a long period the Church had won her new children singly; they had come to her under the guidance and guarantee of the older Christians who had converted them and knew them personally. Now this was no longer the case: the Church was already a standard lifted up among the nations; the Apologies revealed her to all, and the persecutions did so still more. People she had not hitherto known came to her each day in increasing numbers. Could she baptise these on a simple profession of faith as Philip had baptised the Ethiopian eunuch? Could she entrust to them the Christian mysteries? Or was it not rather necessary to imitate the reserve of Jesus, who did not trust himself to those who went to Him because He knew what was in man?

The motives for this attitude were the more urgent because the danger of apostasy became greater in face of more violent persecutions: the *Shepherd* of Hermas has shown us the anxiety of the Roman Church in respect of her lapsed children. If the renewal is so difficult, would it not be better to reserve the grace of baptism

¹ On the catechumenate, see especially Dom B. Capelle, *L'Introduction du catéchuménat à Rome*, in *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, Vol. V, 1933, pp. 129-154; Dom P. de Puniet, article *Catéchuménat*, in *Dict. d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*.

² Dom Capelle sets them forth thus: "The great expansion of Christianity in the second century—Tertullian will soon boast that only the deserts were the pagan temples—was certainly one of the determining reasons. Recruits flocked in, they had to be formed with care, and their numbers prompted the organisation of this formation. It was also necessary to prepare them for dangers, pagan and heretical. Between 150 and 200, theological thought was very active, and controversy constant. A Christian had therefore to be given a solid foundation. This seems to be the explanation of the surprising insistence on a three years' preparation, coming suddenly after a period characterized by complete facility of entry. Possibly the Marcionite crisis contributed to make the reform more necessary and more urgent. Marcion had organised his ecclesiastical system very carefully. This was one of the reasons for his success, and we know that the Church hastened to imitate him" (p. 150).

for those who may be counted on to keep it pure of all apostasy?

The danger of heresy was perhaps still more to be feared. St. Irenæus describes the lamentable inconstancy of those Christians who fall away into the Gnostic sects, escape from them, and fall yet again. Once more the same question arises in the minds of the heads of the Church: had these weak Christians been received too quickly and too easily?³

Admission to the Catechumenate

Influenced by these various motives, the heads of the Church, before conferring baptism upon neophytes, subjected them to a long preparation and to many tests. If we wish to understand the significance of these new arrangements, it will be useful to recall the character of baptismal initiation at the time of Justin.⁴ Candidates for baptism were asked for a profession of faith and a promise to conform their lives to Christian teaching; "then they were taught to pray and to ask for God by fasting the remission of their sins, while the other Christians prayed and fasted with them" (*Apol.*, I, lxi, 2). Baptism followed immediately.⁵ This text, it is true, describes only the final preparation immediately preceding the baptism, and implies a prior instruction. Before candidates could profess their belief in the Church's doctrine they must have been given instructions concerning it, but there is no evidence that such instruction was organised in common, or that its duration was determined by the legislation of the Church.

Moreover—and this is a very important point—the description

³ To these motives, which were the most important, others may have been added. Dom Capelle (*op. cit.*, p. 150) writes: "There was a last cause, certainly not negligible and perhaps decisive, the indirect influence of the mystery religions." He notes in Origen the terminology of the mysteries, and thinks traces of it can be found still more easily in Clement. These indications are not to be neglected, but we must be careful not to exaggerate their significance. The use of the language of the mysteries, so frequent in Philo, Clement and Origen, is a literary custom rather than a religious one.

⁴ The texts have been quoted in Bk. II, pp. 463-465.

⁵ On this passage, Dom Capelle (*op. cit.*, p. 132) justly remarks: "This period of prayer and fasting was not connected with a progressive initiation: it was a simple ritual act, and fairly short. The real preparation must have taken place previously. Justin does not speak of a common teaching for catechumens. Doubtless it was not yet officially organised. The form and duration of the initiation depended on the persons and circumstances. But the Church desired certain guarantees before proceeding to baptism. The *Apology* mentions the guarantee the candidates had to give, but we do not know what form this took."

Justin gives of the baptismal Mass and of the Sunday Mass⁶ does not mention the distinction, so clear in later documents, between the Mass of the Catechumens and the Mass of the Faithful: indeed, the very fact that the apologist communicates to his pagan readers the liturgy of the Christian mysteries is a sufficient indication that the Secret did not as yet exist.

Things were no longer the same in the time of Tertullian. In his treatise *De praescriptione* this writer, arguing against the heretics and especially against the Marcionites, criticises them because they do not distinguish the catechumens from the faithful, and give to all equal access to the mysteries, and allow the same participation in the prayers. And what seems to him to be especially reprehensible is that "even if pagans were to come in, they would cast the holy things to the dogs, and their pearls, which in fact are false ones, to swine."⁷ At this date the catechumenate was already definitely organised. It was a time of penance, during which the *novicioli* practised renunciation, and "like little dogs which begin to see a little light," were progressively instructed concerning the divine mysteries.⁸ The works in which Tertullian gives us this information belong to the time of his life as a priest, prior to his defection; they were written in the first years of the third century (200-206).

A little after this, about 217, we have the *Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus.⁹ Dom Capelle, after Dom Connolly, has reconstituted the text of this work by comparing together the derivative versions, Arabian, Coptic, and Ethiopian, also the *Canons of Hippolytus*, the Latin version, and the *Testament of Our Lord*.

We need not go into all the details of this canonical legislation, but we must note in the first place that those only were admitted to the catechumenate who were free to dispose of themselves and

⁶ See Bk. II, pp. 463-465.

⁷ *De praescriptione*, xli, 2. Cf. D'Alès, *Théologie de Tertullien*, pp. 317-321.

⁸ *De paenitentia*, vi, 1. Cf. *De baptismo*, 1 and xx; *De corona*, ii and iii.

⁹ On this work, cf. *infra*, p. 744. The labours of Schwartz and Dom Connolly have restored this work to Hippolytus, leaving open, however, several critical and historical questions. The work was composed by Hippolytus during his schism; but as Dom Capelle (*op. cit.*, p. 133) remarks, Hippolytus "was conservative, and one of his main complaints against the lawful Pope was precisely that he had innovated. We can therefore conjecture that Hippolytus did not make many changes in the baptismal ritual he adopted." At the same time it must be added that Hippolytus seems to have been a very strict legislator, and it is possible that he imposed on the members of his little church more rigorous rules than those which were in force in the Roman Church.

were leading honourable lives. Slaves could be received only with the authorisation of their masters, and married people only if they were living together. Those who made images or pictures had to give up their trade, as also those employed in circus games, hunters, fishers, soldiers, drivers, priests of idols, astrologers, magicians, magistrates, prefects, diviners, interpreters of dreams, and makers of philtres or amulets,¹⁰ and lastly schoolmasters as far as possible. These manifold interdictions show the extent to which paganism permeated public life, and what precautions the Church had to take in order to safeguard her children.

The duration of the catechumenate was fixed with precision: "Catechumens will spend three years in learning doctrine; but if the candidate is docile and well conducted, a determined period will not be applied to him, but one according to his conduct."¹¹ In addition, the catechumen had to be presented solemnly to the assembly of the faithful. These asked him why he desired the faith, and after hearing the testimonies of those who had brought him concerning his aptitude to understand the doctrine, questioned him on his life and his profession.¹² Another examination took place before baptism, dealing with the conduct of the neophyte during his catechumenate:

When the catechumens have been chosen or are ready for baptism, let their life be examined, to see if they have lived in the fear of God before baptism, if they have honoured widows, visited the sick, done good to all, and if those who present them give satisfactory testimony to this effect. If they have done this, they are to hear the Gospel from the time when they are chosen, and each day hands will be laid on

¹⁰ Cf. *Canons of Hippolytus*, nn. 62-78.

¹¹ We read in Canon 91: "Catechumenus, qui dignus est lumine, non impedit eum tempus; doctor autem ecclesiae ille est, qui hanc quaestionem dijudicat." Yet the duration of three years is found also in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, VIII, xxxii, 16; at the Council of Elvira, canon 42 (two or three years), and in the *Testament of Our Lord*, ed. Rahmani, p. 117; cf. article, *Catéchuménat*, cols. 2583-4. It is everywhere admitted that good conduct may shorten the time of probation, and that bad conduct may prolong it. Origen (*Hom. 9 in Jesum Nave*, ix) urges his hearers to lessen the time of their novitiate by their good conduct.

¹² Cf. *Canons 60-62*: "Illi qui ecclesiam frequentant eo consilio ut inter christianos recipiantur, examinentur omni cum perseverantia, et quam ob causam suum cultum respuant, ne forte intrent illudendi causa. Quod si vero aliquis in fide vera advenit, recipiatur cum gaudio interrogeturque de opificio, instruatque per diaconum discatque in ecclesia renuntiare satanae et pompae ejus toti. Hoc autem observetur omni tempore, quo instruitur, antequam cetero populo adnumeretur." On this presentation of the candidate, cf. art. *Catéchuménat*, col. 2581.

them and they will be instructed. When the day of their baptism approaches, the bishop shall make them take an oath,¹³ to know if they are pure. And if one of them is found to be impure he shall be put aside by himself, because he has not received the doctrine with faith, and is not fit to receive baptism. . . . Those who are to be baptised will be warned that on the fifth day of the week they must wash and be exorcised; and if there be among them a woman in her menstrual period, she must be put aside to be baptised another day. Those who are to be baptised must fast on the Friday. On the Saturday the bishop will gather all those who are to be baptised, and bid them pray on their knees. And when he has imposed hands on them, he is to exorcise every impure spirit to flee away from them and never return. And when he has finished the exorcism, he is to breathe on them, and they are to hear a reading and an exhortation.¹⁴

This legislation reveals to us a catechumenate in which the two classes of catechumens, *audientes* and *competentes* (or *illuminati*) are already distinct; there is no question as yet of the *traditio symboli*.¹⁵ But the catechumenate we find in these documents is already governed by a fairly detailed canonical legislation, and in this respect differs from the preparation for baptism explained to us by St. Justin.

The Liturgical Formulæ

If we continue the study of the canonical documents which depend on the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, we find a liturgy of baptism and of the Eucharist which it is interesting to compare with the primitive liturgy.

In St. Clement, St. Polycarp, and St. Justin, the liturgical prayers

¹³ Coptic: "The bishop exorcises them."

¹⁴ Cf. Canons 102-111. This text differs only by a few details from that which we have followed. Canon 103: "Tunc confiteatur episcopo—huic enim soli de ipso est impositum onus—ut episcopus eum approbet dignumque habeat qui fruatur mysteriis" (instead of the oath or the exorcism). 110. "Postquam autem finivit adjurationes eorum, in facies eorum sufflet signetque pectora et frontes, aures et ora eorum. Ipsi autem tota illa nocte vigilias agant sacris sermonibus et orationibus occupati."

¹⁵ Dom de Puniët, *op. cit.*, col. 2584: "There is no explicit allusion to the Apostles' Creed, still less to the liturgical act of the tradition of the creed. . . . It is certain . . . that the *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Egyptian Constitutions* are completely ignorant of the *traditio symboli*. The Egyptians in any case never practised it, and we shall see later on that the Coptic and Abyssinian rituals have no trace of it. The same applies to the Roman usage of the *redditio symboli*: in the *Constitutions*, the formulæ of the symbol relate, in point of fact, to the *confessio fidei* at the baptism, which differed from the *redditio symboli*."

were arranged according to a traditional scheme, but they developed this freely. As Justin says when describing the Sunday Mass, "he who presides sends up to heaven prayers and eucharists, as well as he can, and all the people reply: Amen."

The documents which we are now studying have quite a different character. For the consecration of bishops, the ordinations of priests, deacons, confessors, lectors, subdeacons, widows, and virgins, they give definite formulæ which the ministers of the Church are to use. The same applies to the administration of baptism and the Eucharist,¹⁶ and various blessings such as those of oil, cheese, and olives. We notice this final injunction: "In every blessing, say: 'To thee the glory, Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit, in the holy Church, now and for ever, Amen.'"¹⁷

In spite of the care he takes to give to his liturgy a fixed form, Hippolytus still bears witness to the previous usage, for in passing he gives to the celebrant the right to pray more or less at length according to his devotion.¹⁸

If we possessed only the documents arising from the *Apostolic Tradition*, we might interpret this canonical legislation as an enterprise on the part of the head of the little church at Rome. What gives it more importance in our eyes is the conservative tendency which Hippolytus manifests throughout his work, and in particular in the preface to the treatise, and again, the history of liturgical texts. Lietzmann has shown that all the liturgies we possess can be reduced to two types from which they have come, the liturgy of Hippolytus, and the liturgy of Serapion.¹⁹ This being so, these

¹⁶ Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 162 and 210.

¹⁷ On this doxology, cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 622 et seq. This mention of the Church in the doxology is characteristic of Hippolytus (*Adversus haeresim Noeti*, xviii). We find it in several places in his liturgy. The imperative command reproduced above indicates something new and artificial, it is isolated in the history of liturgy, and disappears with the little church of Hippolytus.

¹⁸ This text is rather difficult. It is absent from Canon 47, and is found in two different forms in the Ethiopian and the Coptic. It comes immediately after the rite of priestly ordination of a confessor. But, as Connolly (*op. cit.*, pp. 64 et seq.) has shown, it refers to the eucharistic liturgy. Here is the Coptic version: "The bishop will celebrate the eucharist, as we have said above. It is not absolutely necessary that he recite the words we have marked, as if reciting them by heart to God in his eucharist, but each will pray as he is able. If he is able to pray sufficiently well by formulating a long prayer, it is well; but if he prays and recites a prayer of restricted length, let no one prevent him, provided his prayer is quite orthodox." Cf. Connolly, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

¹⁹ *Messe und Herrenmahl*, pp. 174 et seq.

two liturgies no longer appear to us as creations without a past and without a future: on the contrary, they were based on a firm tradition, and are the starting point of a new development. All this implies that this codified liturgy, the fruit of long usage, was henceforth imposed on the whole Church.

The Baptismal Creed

What we have just said as to the Eucharistic liturgy is confirmed by the history of the baptismal rite, and in particular by the history of the Creed. We need not repeat here in detail a history which will be found in other works,²⁰ but only the conclusions. These are not without their interest in the subject we are now discussing. The baptismal creed is a liturgical formula, and the history of liturgy is best able to help us to determine its origin and development. As in the case of the eucharistic liturgy, we have here at the beginning a command of Christ, the order given to the apostles: "Go, teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; this precept imposed the baptismal formula, and has given rise to the rule of faith.²¹

At first, this Trinitarian creed was very short; it was a liturgical formula which set forth the profession of faith of the neophytes, based on the baptismal formula. It expressed this at first very briefly, then more explicitly, as new questions arose, threatening the faith. As a result, the Church gradually defined the rule of faith, incorporating into the ancient Creed Christological formulæ already consecrated by liturgical usage.

In the first two centuries, this Creed still possessed its primitive plasticity; it could take various forms in opposition to heresies; and in one and the same theologian, in St. Irenæus for instance, it could have more than one expression.²² Essentially, it consisted of a profession of faith in the three divine Persons; it also always contained the mysteries of the life of Christ. But this Christology was, in the *Adversus haereses*, attached to the third article of the Creed, while in the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* it

²⁰ Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 141-173; *Les origines du Symbole baptismal*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XX, 1930, pp. 97-124, and books and articles mentioned in these works.

²¹ This origin is very clear in Tertullian, *De praescriptione*, xiii and xx.

²² It suffices to compare *Adversus haereses*, I, x, 2, and *Demonstration*, vi, to realise this difference; cf. *Recherches*, art. mentioned, pp. 103 and 105.

belonged to the second article.²³ In addition, the materials were not only arranged in different ways, but they were also selected in a different manner. We recognise elements borrowed from a previous liturgical tradition, but these borrowed elements differ.²⁴

When we pass from Irenæus to Tertullian and Hippolytus, we notice that liturgical usage has become more definite: from the two latter we can derive the same symbol, the Roman Creed.²⁵ This definite determination of the formula was probably the result of the Christological and Trinitarian heresies which towards the end of the second century troubled the whole Church, and especially the Roman Church.²⁶ It was greatly facilitated by the circumstances we have already mentioned: liturgical usage came to have an invariable form, sanctioned by the authority of the Church; the baptismal Creed was subject to this law.

This codification of the liturgy developed within particular churches; nevertheless the formulæ or rules adopted by one church generally spread through its sphere of influence, and that of Rome thus spread to Carthage and Africa. Beyond these churches linked to Rome by special bonds, the universal Church as a whole experienced the attraction of Rome and was subject to its authority. Nevertheless, liturgical usage enjoyed a wide autonomy; the codification we have found at Rome will take place also elsewhere, but more slowly, and following different patterns. But on one point, the determination of the date of Easter, Rome will insist on the unification of custom.²⁷

The Canon of the New Testament

The constitution of the canon of the New Testament was still more important than the codification of the liturgy. It was not

²³ Similarly in Tertullian we find the mention of the Holy Spirit or of the resurrection of the body attached to the Christology: *De praescript.*, xiii; *Adv. Praxeas*, ii; *De virg. vel.*, i.

²⁴ The passage in the *Demonstration*, vi, can be studied from this point of view; it is a brief commentary on the Creed rather than a literal transcription of it; but this commentary is composed of traditional formulæ, traces of which can be found in Barnabas, Justin, and Hippolytus. Cf. *Recherches*, art. quoted, p. 103, n. 10.

²⁵ Cf. Dom B. Capelle, *Le Symbole romain au IIe siècle*, in *Revue bénédictine*, Vol. XXXIX, 1927, pp. 33-44; Lietzmann, *Symbolstudien*, XIV, in *Zeitschr. f. N. T. Wiss.*, 1927, pp. 75-95; *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 162-168.

²⁶ Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 161, *Recherches*, art. cit., pp. 115 et seq.

²⁷ Cf. *infra* p. 722.

entirely independent of the latter, and it resulted from the same influences: faced by the heretics, who borrowed from every source teaching in harmony with their particular ideas, the Church found it necessary to assure the purity of its faith, and hence to determine its sources with greater precision.²⁸

This object is plain in St. Irenæus. It dominates his third book, in which the bishop of Lyons affirms with remarkable emphasis that there are and can be only four gospels. This reaction was necessary, for already at that time apocryphal writings were multiplying. It was at that time that Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, passing by the church of Rhossos on the Gulf of Issus, was given the *Gospel of Peter*, with which he was unacquainted. In order not to seem too severe, he allowed its reading, but subsequently, having read it himself, he was convinced that it was the work of Docetic heretics, and at once wrote to the faithful of Rhossos withdrawing the permission he had granted.²⁹ It was also at that time that apocryphal *Acts* of apostles were spreading: Tertullian narrates that the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* were composed by a priest who was consequently degraded;³⁰ if he was not condemned more severely, it was because these *Acts* were not heretical, and the priest in question protested that he had written them only through piety towards the apostle. Other writers, inspired by different motives, composed books which were heretical or at least suspect.³¹

Besides this doubtful literature consisting of gospels, acts and apocalypses, we find a frankly Gnostic literature springing up: the *Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, the *Revelation of John*, and *Pistis Sophia*;³² and these books present themselves as revelations of the Lord entrusted by some chosen souls to a few initiates.

Amidst such great confusion, the Church had the duty of safeguarding souls and also of distinguishing between imaginative romances and works written under divine inspiration. From the first, she had set forth to Christians under her own guarantee the

²⁸ Cf. Lagrange, *Histoire ancienne du Canon du Nouveau Testament*, 1933, especially pp. 58-133.

²⁹ A fragment of this letter is quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xii, 3-6. Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

³⁰ *De baptismo*, xvii. Cf. Vouaux, *Les Actes de Paul*, pp. 29-31.

³¹ The apocryphal *Acts* are almost all contaminated by Docetic or Gnostic influences; it is often difficult to determine whether these influences affect the whole work or only certain portions inserted in an orthodox whole; cf. *infra*, Bk. IV, ch. xxv, § 1.

³² Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 119-122.

books inspired by God. It belonged to her now to repeat a teaching more than ever necessary, and to give it such force and clarity that there should be no room for misunderstanding.

Here again, the codification applied to liturgical usage prepared the way for the canonical determination of a list of the books of the New Testament. We know the passage of Justin concerning the Sunday Mass: "There are readings from the memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets, as much as time permits."³³ A little earlier the same writer mentions that these memoirs are called "gospels."³⁴

This usage of the public reading of sacred writings goes back to the apostles themselves. St. Paul, in sending his first epistle to the Thessalonians, requests that it should be read to all the brethren (v, 27); in the same way the letter to the Colossians was to be read at Colossae, then at Laodicea, and the letter to the Laodiceans at Colossae (*Col.* iv, 16).³⁵

These public readings were, like the rest of the liturgy, subject to control and legislation by the Church; hence it was necessary that a canonical regulation should make known which were sacred books, to distinguish them from the rest.

Even private reading had to conform itself, so far as the choice of books was concerned, to the judgment of the Church. We have seen this in the case of the *Gospel of Peter*; we find it again in connection with the first versions of the New Testament. Towards the end of the second century, the Church, which had spread widely beyond the hellenic world, had to make known her sacred books to her new children, and to give them translations in their own languages. Already at that period we find Latin³⁶ and Syriac translations of the books of the New Testament,³⁷ and in the third

³³ *Apol.*, I, lxvii, 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, lxvi, 3.

³⁵ About 170, Dionysius of Corinth, writing to Soter, informs him that his letter had been read to the brethren on the Sunday, and would continue to be read, together with the first letter written by Clement (*Hist. eccl.*, IV, xxiii, 11). The public reading of a document was a mark of veneration, but not necessarily an indication of canonicity. Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-22.

³⁶ The Scillitan martyrs (July 17th, 180) admitted in their interrogation that they possessed "venerandi libri legis divinae et epistolae Pauli apostoli viri just" (ed. by Robinson, *Texts and Studies*, I, 2, 1891). Tertullian utilises and sometimes discusses the Latin translations of several gospels or epistles. Cf. D'Alès, *Théologie de Tertullien*, pp. 232 et seq.

³⁷ The *Diatessaron* of Tatian was composed, probably in Greek, shortly after 170, and at once translated by its author into Syriac. Cf. A. S. Marmardjii, O.P., *Diatessaron de Tatien* (Beyrouth, 1935), p. ix: "It is sufficiently clear to-day that

century, Coptic versions appear.³⁸ This fact itself testifies to the existence of an already constituted collection of books.³⁹ This is particularly noticeable in the case of the four gospels: about 170 the harmony made by Tatian presupposed what St. Irenæus was to establish ten years later so forcibly: there are four gospels, and only four.

To all these causes we must also add the controversies provoked by heresy. Marcion rejected the whole of the Old Testament; of the New he retained only the Gospel of St. Luke in a mutilated form, and the epistles of St. Paul. Here was a first point to be debated with him, and in fact it dominated the whole controversy. On the other hand, the Montanist misuse of the Johannine *Apocalypse* and of the Sermon after the Last Supper had led to an extreme reaction, and caused in certain circles an attitude of mistrust towards the *Apocalypse*, and even towards the Johannine gospel.⁴⁰

This codification of the Canon was clearly not the work of one man: it was but the confirmation by the Church of the judgment she had passed from the beginning on the sacred books; in view of the various circumstances we have mentioned such confirmation had become indispensable. In the case of the majority of the books the Church gave this confirmation without hesitation. the four Gospels, the *Acts*, and the Epistles of St. Paul were received in the whole church without controversy. The *Apocalypse* was sometimes called in question by reason of the anti-Montanist and anti-Millenarianist reactions; the epistle to the Hebrews and the Catholic epistles were the subject of doubts concerning their origin, and were received only after a fairly long discussion.⁴¹

On the other hand, we find in the second century certain churches receiving with favour books without authority. We have

Tatian began by composing his *Diatessaron* in Greek . . . and that he then translated it into Syriac. . . . It was, strictly speaking, a Syriac work for Syrians."

³⁸ The Sahidic version may belong to the end of the third century or the beginning of the fourth: Lagrange, *Critique textuelle du N.T.*, II (Paris, 1935), pp. 322-324.

³⁹ The publication of the Chester-Beatty papyrus has shown that from the first half of the third century the New Testament writings were in the hands of Christians, and collected in a codex. *Chester-Beatty Biblical Papyri*, London, 1933, Introduction, p. 12.

⁴⁰ On all this, cf. Kidd, *History of the Church*, Vol. I, pp. 268-272.

⁴¹ Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-133, where he sums up the conclusions of his enquiry.

seen an instance in the case of Serapion of Antioch, who first allowed and then set aside the *Gospel of Peter*. The *Shepherd of Hermas*, speedily rejected by the Western churches, retained its favour for a long time in Egypt.⁴²

These local and temporary hesitations obscured the question of the Canon and made its outlines somewhat doubtful. But in the centre the light was clear, and was never dimmed. We find moreover on this matter of the Canon of the Scriptures what we have already found in other matters, such as the baptismal creed: it was at Rome in the first place that the legislative work was formulated, to spread from thence throughout the whole Church.

For it is a fact that the first known catalogue of the sacred books emanates from Rome at the beginning of the third century,⁴³ in the shape of the *Muratorian Fragment*.⁴⁴ Did this text emanate from Hippolytus? Many historians think so, and not without reason.⁴⁵ At the same time, the question of its author is here a secondary one: what is more important is the character of the document. Harnack describes it thus: ⁴⁶ "This *Fragment* is a work of authority; it was destined to direct all Christendom, and to give it an example to be followed; it was very likely of Roman origin." And he concludes: "With its apodeictic phrases and its final judgment on Hermas, it has no parallel in the early Church other than the excommunication of Theodotus from the Catholic Church by Victor, the exclusion of the Asiatics from Catholic unity by the same Victor, the dogmatic declaration by Zephyrinus in favour of Unitarianism,⁴⁷ and the peremptory edict of Callistus on penance.

⁴² Origen (*Comment. in Mt.* xiv, 21) regards it as Divine Scripture, but confesses that his opinion is not held by the whole Church, and does not claim to impose it. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 346 *et seq.*

⁴³ Zahn (*Geschichte des N.T. Kanons*, Vol. II, p. 136) puts the *Fragment* a little before 217; Kidd (*op. cit.*, p. 272) dates it between 175 and 200.

⁴⁴ The text of this *Fragment* is in Zahn, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 5-8, in Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-70, in Schumacher's *Handbook of Scripture Study*, 1923, Vol. I, and in other manuals. The most detailed commentaries are those of Zahn (*ibid.*, pp. 1-143) and Lagrange, *ibid.*, pp. 70-84.

⁴⁵ Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I, 2, pp. 405 *et seq.*; Robinson, in *Expositor*, Vol. I, 1906, pp. 481 *et seq.*; Zahn, *Komment. zur Offenbarung Joh.*, 1924, p. 106; Bonwetsch, *Nachr. d. Ges. d. Wiss. z. Goett.*, June 7th, 1923; Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-84.

⁴⁶ *Zeitschrift für N.T. Wissenschaft*, Vol. XXIV, 1925, pp. 1-16. In this article Harnack rejects the attribution of this work to Hippolytus.

⁴⁷ The reader will make the reservations called for by this interpretation of the declaration by Zephyrinus, who was completely orthodox and in no wise approved Unitarianism.

Hence we shall have to give to the bishop of Rome a greater part in the creation or confirmation of the New Testament than has been given hitherto." This opinion of Harnack has traces of the author's bias against the bishops of Rome, whom he accuses of Monarchianism, but it is not all wrong: the *Muratorian Fragment* is, in its way, a peremptory edict like that of Callistus which we shall soon have to examine.

The Apostolic Succession

After the Bible, the other source of the faith is Tradition. When Irenæus undertook the task of determining and safeguarding the sources of doctrine, he dealt with both these domains, equally invaded by the Gnostics.⁴⁸ From the beginning of the second century, and in greater measure as the doctrinal controversies multiplied, the apostolic teaching was examined as a criterion of truth. The Gnostics themselves appealed to it: they did so by mutilating the Scriptures, doing violence to them by their exegesis, putting forth works under the cover of apostolic authority, and also by the idea of a secret tradition through which the apostolic teaching had come down to themselves.

This tradition was sometimes put under the guarantee of a real or fictitious disciple of the apostles or of the Lord: thus Basilides, according to Clement,⁴⁹ appealed to Glaucias, who was, in his view, a disciple of St. Peter. According to Hippolytus,⁵⁰ Basilides and his son Isidore claimed that Matthias had communicated to them secret discourses which he had himself received from the Saviour in confidential communications.⁵¹

At other times the supposed authors of this revelation were not named, and people contented themselves with invoking a secret

⁴⁸ Irenæus, *Adversus haereses*, III, ii, 1-2, quoted above, p. 675-676.

⁴⁹ *Strom.*, VII, xvii.

⁵⁰ *Philos.*, VII, xx, 1.

⁵¹ We occasionally find similar legends in Clement of Alexandria, who did not keep himself quite free from Gnostic influences on this matter of Tradition. Thus, in *Hypotyposes*, fr. 13 (*Eusebius*, *Hist. eccles.*, II, 1, 4), we read: "After the resurrection, the Lord transmitted the gnosis to James the Just, to John and to Peter; these transmitted it to the other apostles, and to the seventy disciples, one of whom was Barnabas." Again, we find this secret tradition prominent in the *Clementine Homilies* in the letter from Peter to James, and in the solemn promise exacted by James from all those who receive from him the teaching of Peter.

tradition, coming from the Lord;⁵² but in this case also the Gnostics affirmed that the first link in the chain was an apostle.⁵³

The Catholic Tradition

Against these Gnostic theses we have the Catholic doctrine of Tradition, as elaborated by St. Irenæus,⁵⁴ and transmitted to Tertullian. To convict slippery opponents of error, it was necessary to establish the existence of an incontestable and universally recognised tradition. Irenæus found its guarantee in the succession of bishops who through their origin were linked up legitimately with the apostles, and through the apostles with Christ. Already in the year 95, Clement established the authority of the Catholic hierarchy by the origin of the episcopal succession; the same argument guaranteed for Irenæus the divine origin and consequently the certainty of the Church's teaching:

The Tradition of the apostles is manifest in the whole world; whosoever wishes to find the truth has only to examine it in every church. We can enumerate the bishops who have been instituted by the apostles and by their successors down to our own time (III, iii, 1).

Tertullian will say the same thing, in addressing the heretics:

Show us the origin of your churches, unfold the series of your bishops in succession from the beginning, in such a way that the first bishop had as guarantor and predecessor one of the apostles, or one of the apostolic men who remained to the end in communion with the apostles. For that is how the apostolic churches set forth their records. . . .⁵⁵

⁵² Thus in the Naassene hymn: "I will teach the secrets of the holy way, that is, the gnosis" (*Philos.*, V, x, 2), and in the letter from Ptolemy to Flora: "When she shall be judged worthy of the apostolic tradition, which we ourselves have received also through succession, with the rule that we are to measure all our words by the doctrine of the Saviour."

⁵³ This secret and anonymous tradition is also found in the Alexandrian theology, at least in Clement. In Origen we notice more reserve: he certainly admits secret revelations received by St. Paul and transmitted by him confidentially to Luke or Timothy, but he does not say that these revelations were transmitted in secret down to his own day.

⁵⁴ This doctrine has been recently studied by D. B. Reynders, *Paradosis, Le progrès de l'idée de tradition jusqu'à saint Irénée*, in *Recherches de Théologie*, Vol. V, 1933, pp. 155-191, and by Père Van den Eynde, *Les Normes de l'enseignement chrétien* pp. 159-192.

⁵⁵ *De praescriptione*, xxxii.

This argument implies the existence of episcopal lists which enabled the various churches, or at least the apostolic churches, to give proof of their origin. The best example is the episcopal list for Rome, transcribed by Irenæus in support of his thesis (III, iv, 1). Such lists have in the present question a twofold interest for us: they show the care taken by the churches, already before Irenæus, to establish the succession of their bishops, and thereby their apostolic origin. At the same time, these lists were not as yet dated, with the duration of each episcopate, so that subsequently, in order to satisfy a legitimate historical curiosity, efforts were made to supply these absent indications by means of conjectures.⁵⁶ The period with which we are dealing was still so close to the beginnings that no need was felt of such reckonings; the only question which arose and which received a peremptory reply was that of the legitimate succession of the bishops, as a guarantee of apostolic origin. The episcopal records will later on constitute the framework for ecclesiastical history, but at first they were only genealogies which linked up the bishops of the apostolic sees with the apostolic founders.

It is in this way that we find, thirty years before Irenæus, the episcopal succession set forth. Hegesippus did his best to determine it in the churches he visited, and especially that of Rome;⁵⁷ and it was this succession which about the same period formed the basis of the argument of Anicetus against Polycarp in the Easter controversy.⁵⁸

Thus Irenæus did not have to create the argument from Tradition through episcopal succession; he had only to collect together the material, but in doing so he gave to the argument a more evident force. The whole matter was set forth by Tertullian in a vigorous summary:

It is therefore well established that every doctrine in agreement with these churches, the matrices and sources of the faith, must be regarded as true, since it constitutes, without room for doubt, that which these

⁵⁶ This character of the early episcopal lists has been well established by E. Caspar, *Die älteste römische Bischofsliste*, in *Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft*, Vol. II, 4, 1926; cf. Van den Eynde, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-195.

⁵⁷ *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xxii, 2-3. Cf. Van den Eynde, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-75.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, V, xxiv, 16: Polycarp, the immediate disciple of St. John and the other apostles, appealed to these; Anicetus to the presbyters who had preceded him. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 75.

churches received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God.⁵⁹

We may add that the argument of Irenæus, more complete than that of Tertullian, always brings out the twofold aspect of Tradition: not only the perpetuity of the testimony which by the regular succession of bishops goes back to the apostles and to Christ, but also the fact that it implies a living chain, and a testimony of the Spirit which guarantees and ensures our union with Christ, not only by faithful adhesion to his doctrine but also by sharing in his life.⁶⁰

Thus, Tradition is a source of truth and of life open to all. To draw from it there is no need of a secret initiation or of learned researches; it suffices to have recourse to the churches, and by preference to those which are the most ancient, those in which the apostles lived, and above all, "the greatest and most ancient, known by all, founded and established at Rome by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul."⁶¹

Penitential Discipline

In the course of the first half of the third century, penitential discipline received a character it had not previously possessed: the reconciliation of sinners was henceforth governed by canonical laws which hitherto had not been formulated. This transformation presents an obvious analogy with those we have found in the history of the liturgy, the formation of the Canon of the New Testament, and the elaboration of the concept of Tradition. Here, as in these other domains, the Church tightened its system and defined its jurisprudence: law took the place of custom.⁶²

⁵⁹ *De praescriptione*, xxi, 4.

⁶⁰ We notice this especially when he is invoking the witness of the churches established amongst the barbarians: "These faithful ones of Christ have neither paper nor ink, but salvation has been written in their hearts by the Spirit, and they diligently keep the old tradition concerning it" (*Adversus haereses*, III, iv, 2); and more explicitly when he describes the vivifying force of the Church's teaching (*ibid.*, III, xxiv, 1). Cf. *supra*, pp. 675-679.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, III, iii, 2. In all this development of the idea of Tradition within the Church, we find no trace of what Caspar thinks was its origin, i.e., a scholastic tradition analogous to that of the philosophical sects, in which teaching was transmitted from master to disciple. Cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXI, 1931, p. 604.

⁶² Our whole aim here is to study this transformation, not to describe in detail the attitude of the Church towards sinners. That would involve a lengthy dis-

To understand the whole significance of this transformation, it is useful to recall the *Shepherd* of Hermas and its preaching of penance. To the sinners who have not been able to remain in grace, signified by the green branch of their baptism, Hermas protests that their collapse is unworthy in Christians, and that baptism ought to be for all the one sole and definitive penance. In future that will be the case, but for the past God is willing still to forgive, and the angel of penance offers salvation to sinners. In all this preaching we recognise the endeavour of a fervent Christian to maintain the Christian ideal in all its purity without, however, casting sinners into despair. There is no question here of the promulgation of a "jubilee": the grace offered once but then neglected will be offered once more, though there is no call for this repeated offering of an exceptional grace, and it will never happen again. Above all, this grace consists, not in the promulgation of an edict of indulgence, but in an exhortation made by a Christian prophet.⁶³ Such an exhortation might well be beneficial, but clearly it could not suffice to solve this grave moral problem: in order to recover the lost grace and the hope of salvation, it is necessary to return to the tower, that is to say, the Church; only the Church can grant or refuse this return; the preaching of Hermas implies that the Church will be merciful, but it cannot give an authoritative assurance of it or determine the conditions.

We know little concerning these conditions. The preaching of Hermas, and later the treatise on penance written by Tertullian when still a Catholic, testify to the part played by the Church in the reconciliation of sinners; ⁶⁴ these indications are confirmed by some facts which we occasionally find, such as the reconciliation of Marcion,⁶⁵ and the exomologesis of heretical women and sinners

cussion, which may be found in the works of some very careful and judicious historians: A. d'Alès, *L'Edit de Calliste*, 1914; P. Galtier, *L'Eglise et la rémission des péchés aux premiers siècles*, 1932. Cf. C. D. Watkins, *History of Penance*, London, 1920, 2 vols., Vol. I, pp. 109-129.

⁶³ Turner has suggested that this preaching by Hermas, brother of Pius the bishop, aimed at upholding the episcopal authority through the credit of the prophet (*Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. XXI, 1920, pp. 193-194). This hypothesis has nothing definite against it, but it is quite gratuitous: there is no indication in the *Shepherd* of an act of authority on the part of the bishop which the prophet wishes to uphold.

⁶⁴ This fact, of very great importance, has been well established by P. d'Alès, *L'Edit de Calliste*, pp. 52-113 (for Hermas); pp. 137-171 (for the *De paenitentia*).

⁶⁵ Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 120 *et seq.*

mentioned by St. Irenæus.⁶⁶ But what we do not find at this time is a canonical law promising the sinner, under certain conditions, reconciliation with the Church and absolution in God's name.⁶⁷

The Edict of Callistus

On the other hand, all this appears in full light in the peremptory edict of which Tertullian complained when he had become a Montanist: "The Sovereign Pontiff, otherwise called the bishop of bishops, issues an edict: 'I remit the sins of adultery and fornication to those who have done penance.' " ⁶⁸

This "peremptory edict," as Tertullian calls it, was certainly the work of a bishop, and very probably the work of the bishop of Rome, Hippolytus's adversary, Callistus.⁶⁹

Tertullian

The *Philosophumena* were composed by Hippolytus only after the death of Callistus; the *De Pudicitia*, on the other hand, was

⁶⁶ *Adversus haereses*, I, vi, 3; I, xiii, 5. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁶⁷ Without attempting to decide so obscure a question, it is permissible to think, in accordance with what we know about the ecclesiastical discipline and liturgy of that time, that the bishops settled the cases which presented themselves on the lines of traditional custom, and not according to a formally defined canonical legislation.

⁶⁸ *De pudicitia*, I, 6.

⁶⁹ This question has often been discussed. P. de Labriolle mentions it (Introduction to the *De pudicitia*, xvii). "From the time of the first editors of Tertullian, the hypothesis generally accepted was that Pope Zephyrinus was referred to. A few critics also thought that a Carthaginian bishop might be meant. But the discovery of the *Philosophumena* has reopened the question." De Rossi tried to show that Callistus was the author of the edict; he was followed by Harnack and "the great majority of the critics." In more recent years, the hypothesis of the African origin of the edict has been adopted by a fair number of critics, who attribute it to Agrippinus; thus P. Galtier (*La véritable Edit de Calliste*, article published in 1927 in the *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 465-488; and again in *L'Eglise et la rémission des péchés*, 1932, pp. 141-183); G. Bardy (*L'Edit d'Agrippinus*, in *Revue des Sciences religieuses*, Vol. IV, 1924, pp. 1-25), and some others mentioned by Galtier. Many others, however, continue to recognise Callistus as the author of the edict: thus Harnack, *Ecclesia Petri propinqua*, in *Sitzungsberichte der preuss. Akad.*, Berlin, Vol. XVIII, 1927; Batiffol, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVII, 1928, p. 38, D'Alès, Vol. XI, 1920, p. 254; H. Koch, *Kallist und Tertullian*, Heidelberg, 1920; *Cathedra Petri*, 1930, p. 6; Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, Vol. I, p. 26; Kidd, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 374. The question, however, is not of great importance in the study of disciplinary development; whether the edict was published at Rome by Callistus or at Carthage by Agrippinus, it marks in any case the exercise of episcopal power acting in a peremptory and supreme manner (cf. Galtier, *op. cit.*, p. 147).

written between 217 and 222 by Tertullian when he had become a Montanist: it was the first reaction of the fierce controversialist against the "peremptory edict," as he calls it. Previously, when he had belonged to the Church, Tertullian himself taught that she could forgive these sins. Now he has changed his view, and boasts of having done so:

Let the psychicals make use of this to accuse me still more of inconsistency. To break with a crowd has never constituted a presumption of sin. As if one had not more chances of erring with the crowd, for truth is loved only by an élite! I shall not draw upon myself more dishonour through a profitable inconstancy than I would derive of glory from a harmful inconstancy. I am not shamed by the error which I have renounced, because I am delighted that I have renounced it, and I realise that I am better and more chaste. No one is ashamed to make progress.⁷⁰

Doubtless Tertullian still admitted that God could forgive sins, but he denied that this power had been imparted to the Church. Consequently, whoever has been guilty of the three sins which he regards as unforgivable—fornication, homicide and apostasy—must do penance for them, but look for pardon from God alone:

Penance remains sterile (for the psychicals), in whom it obtains only a human peace. With us, on the contrary, who remember that the Lord alone forgives faults, and hence also mortal faults, it is profitable. For, delivered into the hands of God, and henceforth prostrate before Him, the soul will labour the more efficaciously for its pardon because she implores it from God alone, and does not believe that a human peace is sufficient for her fault, and prefers to blush before the Church rather than return into communion with her. Seated before her doors, she instructs others by the example of her opprobrium, she calls to her aid the tears of her brethren, and returns richer because of their pity than she would be through a restored communion. And if she reaps less here below, she is sowing more with the Lord.⁷¹

⁷⁰ i, 10-11. On the significance of this admission, cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-183. A comparison of the *De paenitentia*, written by Tertullian when still a Catholic, with the *De pudicitia*, confirms these statements. "In the *De pudicitia*, Tertullian takes sides against the Catholic doctrine of his time. And he shows us with full evidence that this doctrine, against which he protests, is the same as he had himself set forth in the *De paenitentia*" (p. 180).

⁷¹ iii, 3-5. Later on Tertullian attributes to the Church the power to forgive sins, but this time it is the Montanist church; and he also adds that the Church refuses to take advantage of her power, in order not to encourage sinners (xxi, 7).

Hippolytus

Of the disciplinary work of Callistus, Tertullian mentions only one feature: the edict promising absolution after due penance, to Christians who had committed adultery and fornication. Hippolytus gives a much more complete picture, but is equally vehement: ⁷² "Callistus was the first to undertake to authorise pleasure, saying that he would forgive sins to all the world; sinners flocked together and filled his school. He said that a bishop, even if he had fallen into a great sin, could not be deposed; he based himself on the words of St. Paul: 'Who are you, to judge the servant of another?'" ⁷³ He allowed women to contract marriage with men of a lower condition, and even with slaves, without having recourse to legal marriage. "Thereupon, one saw women who call themselves faithful use all kinds of means to destroy before their term the children they had conceived, whether by a slave or by a husband unworthy of them; their rank and fortune made this necessary. And thus Callistus inculcated at one and the same time concubinage and infanticide. . . . In his days, for the first time, those belonging to his party dared to allow a second baptism. Such was the work of the famous Callistus!"

It is difficult to distinguish in this diatribe the elements of truth it may contain. The easiest case to explain is that of unsuitable marriages; the Roman legislation and in particular the *senatus-consultus* of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus forbade these unions.⁷⁴ But there was a grave reason for evading this interdiction: in the Roman aristocracy conversions were rare, especially amongst men; Christian women might therefore ask the Church to sanction marriages which the civil law did not recognise, and the Church had the right to do this.⁷⁵ These authorisations, required by the common good, might nevertheless have dangerous consequences: these women, becoming mothers, might be tempted to procure abortion to hide their unsuitable marriage. If such a case did in

⁷² *Philosophumena*, IX, xii. This text has been translated and studied by D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 217 *et seq.*

⁷³ *Rom.* xiv, 4. Callistus is said to have admitted into the clergy bishops, priests and deacons who had been married twice and even three times; he even retained in his position a cleric who subsequently married.

⁷⁴ Texts given by Duchesne, *Origines chrétiennes*, p. 297.

⁷⁵ An inscription published by De Rossi, *Bull.*, 1881, p. 67, and recalled by Duchesne (*op. cit.*, p. 298, n.) mentions a certain well-known lady married to one who was a slave or a freedman.

fact happen, and if Callistus gave absolution to the guilty mother, this would show that he claimed to have the power to remit the sin of homicide, just as he remitted the sins of the flesh.⁷⁶

His conduct towards bigamous or sinful clerics and bishops⁷⁷ is difficult to determine; ⁷⁸ the text of St. Paul which he invoked and which is also mentioned by Tertullian⁷⁹ may have been wrongly used, but also it may have been legitimately invoked against agitators or jealous persons who sought to quarrel with their bishop.⁸⁰

The question of "second baptism" is still more obscure. There can be no question here of a baptism conferred by Callistus on heretics previously baptised in their own sect and subsequently coming to him: the position taken thirty years later by St. Stephen in the matter of heretical baptisms and the argument which he based on the constant tradition of the Church, rule out the possibility that St. Callistus adopted on this matter the contrary practice. The most likely explanation of this text is the one which sees in this second baptism a solemn absolution given by the Church to the sinners it reconciled.⁸¹

Attitude of St. Callistus

In spite of the doubts raised by an impassioned accusation like that of Hippolytus, and the difficulty we find in unravelling the historic facts which it exaggerated and misrepresented, it seems possible to infer by means of these calumnies the real attitude of St. Callistus. His pontificate (217-222) coincided with the reign of Elagabalus and the first months of that of Alexander Severus. During those five years we know of no violent persecution;⁸² it was

⁷⁶ It is obviously to sins of the flesh that the beginning of the accusation refers, and here the testimony of Hippolytus confirms that of Tertullian.

⁷⁷ The reference is to bishops who had been married twice or thrice before their consecration, and hence (I Tim. iii, 2) ought not to be raised to the episcopate.

⁷⁸ Tertullian mentions that bigamous clerics had been removed (*De exhortatione castitatis*, vii), but elsewhere he complains of the impunity enjoyed by certain scandalous bishops (*De monogamia*, xii). Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 224, n. 1; Duchesne, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

⁷⁹ *De jejuniis*, xv; *De pudicitia*, ii.

⁸⁰ St. Cyprian and many others suffered much from calumnious accusations.

⁸¹ Cf. De Rossi, in *Bolletino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 1866, p. 30; Benson, *Cyprian*, London, 1897, p. 336; D'Alès, *La théologie de saint Hippolyte*, pp. 63-64; *L'Edit de Calliste*, p. 226.

⁸² It is possible that Callistus perished as a victim of a riot. Cf. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 320.

for the Church a time of peace and of rapid propagation. In these circumstances one can understand that the penitential legislation of the bishop of Rome did not have to provide for the reconciliation of apostates.⁸³ The problem would become a very thorny one thirty years later, after the persecution by Decius. But at the time of which we are writing it was not so pressing. Apostates were doubtless very rare, but sinners were more numerous, and the cases of conscience they presented had to be solved. In deciding them in the way we have seen, Callistus, in our view, did but sanction by canonical legislation measures taken by the Church before his time, but this sanction was in fact of great importance. For the pardon which the *Shepherd* described as an exceptional measure was from now on approved by official edicts of the bishop of Rome. We can understand that in approving with his authority such grave measures, Callistus may have thought it desirable to justify them by an appeal to Scriptural texts: one must tolerate the tares in the field of the householder; the Church is like the ark of Noe, having within itself pure and impure animals.⁸⁴ This courageous and necessary initiative will, after the persecutions of Decius and Valerian, be extended to the case of repentant apostates, but this new indulgence will lead to new resistance and to new schisms.

The Didascalia

The *Didascalia Apostolorum*,⁸⁵ later than the episcopate of Callistus but seemingly before the persecution of Decius, does not refuse to any sinner the Church's mercy and reconciliation. It of course strongly emphasises the Christian ideal: baptism should be the one penance: "Notum est omnibus quod, si quis peccaverit iniquum aliquid post baptismum, hic in gehenna condemnatur" (ch. V). But it instructs the bishop to reconcile all repentant sinners, even idolators, murderers⁸⁶ and adulterers.⁸⁷

⁸³ Kidd (*op. cit.*, p. 375) thinks that Callistus dealt with all sins, including idolatry, in one and the same way. This is a legitimate interpretation of the text of Hippolytus, but there is nothing to prove that this text must be taken literally.

⁸⁴ These Scriptural references are said by Hippolytus to have been invoked by Callistus.

⁸⁵ *Didascalia Apostolorum*, ed. H. Connolly, Oxford, 1929.

⁸⁶ After quoting the Prayer of Manasses, it comments as follows: "Audistis, filioli dilectissimi nobis, quomodo Dominus pessime ei qui idolatra fuit et in-

The bishop is indeed put in the Church as a judge established by God and given the power of binding and loosing: "In Ecclesia sede verbum faciens, quasi potestatem habens judicare pro Deo eos qui peccaverunt: quoniam vobis episcopis dictum est per evangelium: Quodcumque ligaveritis super terram, erit ligatum et in caelo" (*ibid.*).⁸⁸ Hence he has a heavenly authority; he must be loved as a father, feared as a king, and honoured as God.⁸⁹

But his high authority involves very grave duties for him, particularly in regard to sinners, whom he must seek out and save, "as the Lord Jesus Christ our good Master and Saviour said. 'Leave the ninety-nine on the mountains, and go and seek the lost sheep'" (ch. VII). These exhortations are pressing, especially in ch. VI and VII; the writer does not weary of citing the texts of the prophets and the Gospel which indicate to pastors their duty to be merciful.⁹⁰ These instructions are very interesting, not only because of the penitential discipline they explain, but also because of the pastoral ideal they describe. We find here once more the maternal love of the Church for her children, as it appeared, for instance, in the *Shepherd* of Hermas,⁹¹ but the Church is personified in the bishop, the father and pastor of Christians.⁹²

nocentes interfecit, et penituit, remisit, id est Manasseti, praesertim cum pejore peccatum non sit aliud idolatriae. Sed locus paenitentiae concessus est" (ch. viii).

⁸⁷ The writer mentions the pardon of the adulterous woman, and adds: "Si autem paenitentem, cum sis sine misericordia, non susciperis, peccavis in Dominum Deum; quoniam non es persuasus nec credidisti salvatori Deo nostro, ut faceres sicut ille fecit in ea muliere quae peccaverat, quam statuerunt presbyteri ante eum, et in eo ponentes iudicium exierunt . . ." (*ibid.*).

⁸⁸ We find the same conception of the duties of a bishop, and the same affirmation of his power to absolve, in the formula for episcopal consecration in St. Hippolytus. Cf. *infra*, p. 746.

⁸⁹ "Ille quidem qui diademam portat rex, corporis solius regnat, super terram solum solvens aut ligans. Episcopus autem et animae et corporis regnat, ligans et solvens super terram caelesti potestate: magna enim et caelestis et deifica data est ei potestas. Episcopum ergo diligite ut patrem, timete sicuti regem, honorate ut Deum" (ch. ix).

⁹⁰ Many of these texts are given by D'Alès, *L'Edit de Calliste*, pp. 360-364.

⁹¹ Particularly in Vision III, ix, 1: "Listen to me, my children: I have brought you up in a great simplicity, innocence and holiness, through the mercy of the Lord who has made justice fall upon you drop by drop. . . ."

⁹² This sentiment is frequently expressed in the documents of the anti-Novatian controversy, and for instance in this fragment of St. Dionysius of Alexandria (ed. Feltoe, p. 63): "We do the contrary (of what Christ does): He, who is good, goes into the mountains to seek for the wandering sheep, He calls it when it goes away, and having found it with great trouble, He brings it back on his shoulders; but we, when we see the sheep coming to us, brutally chase it away with kicks."

Catholic Unity

In the preceding pages we have described the development of ecclesiastical discipline in the framework of the local communities; if we study the relations between the communities we find a parallel development of the chief organs of Church government.⁹³

We must repeat here what Batiffol wrote more than thirty years ago, at the end of his excellent work *Primitive Catholicism*.⁹⁴

The rapidity with which Christianity was propagated during the first three centuries, and that under the pressure of the imperial persecutions, is not then the only fact that should make the historian wonder: the internal and organic development of Christianity is still more wonderful. Far from being, as is claimed by Protestant historians, a series of crises and transformations that could only have brought forth differentiations and dislocations, Christendom shows itself to be a catholicity, a unity, a homogeneity; it is such in the year 200, and in the year 250, after an existence of two centuries.

In all this canonical, liturgical and administrative work which we have briefly outlined, we see the efforts of men endowed with a prudent moderation, charity, mutual regard, and a desire for unity. The bishops received from the apostles the power to teach and to govern, but at the same time also the grace of the Holy Spirit; they had the right to bind and to loose, but also a paternal instinct, and a solicitude for all Christians which made them tender towards all faults, and accessible to all sinners. Charged with the burden of the churches, these bishops, and above all the bishop of Rome, had an immense responsibility, and felt the weight of it; a few among them, such as Polycrates and Cyprian, might misunderstand the traditions which they had to keep, but these conflicts, which seemed likely to split the Church, calmed down in charity. All around, the sects broke up into fragments almost as soon as they arose; Marcionism itself, which kept so rigid a framework of hierarchical organisation, had split up by the end of the second century into rival confessions. The Catholic Church expanded from day to day, and at the same time tightened up its unity. St. Irenæus, a witness to this intense life, explains its mystery thus: "Just as without water one cannot make one single mass with grains of

⁹³ See Bk. IV, ch. xxx and xxxi.

⁹⁴ *Primitive Catholicism*, p. 411.

wheat, or one single loaf, so we would not have been able to become one single body in Christ Jesus without this heavenly water (of the Holy Spirit). And just as the dry earth bears no fruit if it be not watered, so we, who were dry wood, would never have borne living fruit without this rain from above.”⁹⁵

⁹⁵ *Adversus haereses*, III, xvii, 2.

THE ROMAN CONTROVERSIES AT THE END OF THE SECOND AND BEGINNING OF THE THIRD CENTURIES

§ I. THE EASTER CONTROVERSY¹

Anicetus's Interview with Polycarp

AT THE end of the second century, there was everywhere an effort to unify and codify the customs of the Church. This tendency manifested itself not only in the individual life of the various churches but also in the relations linking these churches with each other and subordinating them to the Roman Church. It is not our purpose to follow here in detail the progress of this concentration of Christian forces,² but the study of liturgical institutions has already introduced us to a grave controversy with which we must now deal, for it brought out into relief the bonds of dependence which ensure the unity of the Catholic Church.

In our outline of the life of St. Polycarp,³ we mentioned, following St. Irenæus,⁴ the voyage which the old Bishop of Smyrna made to Rome in the pontificate of Anicetus, in 154.⁵ The two bishops had to settle some secondary questions which were quickly smoothed out; but there was one important matter upon which they

¹ Bibliography.—The principal documents will be found in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii-xxv. To these must be added the texts mentioned later, especially the *Epistola Apostolorum*, ch. xv in the Ethiopian (ch. viii in the Coptic). Duchesne, *Les origines chrétiennes*, ch. xvi pp. 237-246; *La Question de la Pâque au concile de Nicée*, in *Revue des questions historiques*, Vol. XXVIII, 1880, pp. 5-42; *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, pp. 285-291; C. Schmidt, *Gesprache Jesu mit seinen Jüngern*, Leipzig, 1919, Exkurs III, *Die Passahfeier in der kleinasiatischen Kirche*, pp. 577-725.

² This progress will be described in later chapters.

³ Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 435.

⁴ Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 16.

⁵ Cf. Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, Vol. I, p. 676, Bardy in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 1927, pp. 496-501. We must not urge against Irenæus the *Life of Polycarp* attributed to Pionius; this apocryphal document was composed by a Syrian towards the middle of the fourth century, and is devoid of authority. Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 705-725.

could not come to an agreement, the Easter question. The Asiatics commemorated Easter on the 14th Nisan, whatever the day of the week; the Romans celebrated it on the Sunday which followed the 14th Nisan. This diversity of dates involved a diversity of rites and of feasts: Easter was for the Asiatics the day of the death of the Lord; they fasted on that day, even if it fell on a Sunday, and broke bread only in the evening, the solemnity ending with the Eucharist and the agape.⁶ The Romans, on the contrary, devoted three days to the memory of the death and resurrection of Christ, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the two first being days of mourning and fasting; the vigil between Saturday and Sunday prepared them for the feast of the Resurrection, celebrated on the Sunday.⁷

This difference in liturgical usage was the more awkward because of the fact that there were a fair number of Asiatics in the Roman community. These on the whole remained faithful to their own particular custom. The Bishops of Rome tolerated this divergence,⁸ but they must have wished for its disappearance.

Polycarp doubtless desired this as much as Anicetus, and we may suppose that if this aged man, more than eighty years old, undertook the voyage to Rome, it was mainly in order to regulate so grave a question.

In spite of evident goodwill on both sides, they could not come to an agreement: "Anicetus could not persuade Polycarp not to observe what he had always observed with John, the disciple of Our Lord, and with the other apostles, whom he had known, and Polycarp equally could not persuade Anicetus to follow this observance, for Anicetus told him that he had to keep to the custom of the presbyters who had preceded him."⁹

The two bishops, equally attached to their different traditions, bowed in presence of this obstacle which seemed insurmountable. They could not ensure liturgical uniformity, but at least they kept the peace between them, and in order to give an evident sign of this, and also to show his veneration for Polycarp, Anicetus gave

⁶ Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 699 *et seq.*

⁷ On what day did the Asiatics commemorate the Resurrection? This point remains obscure. Schmidt (*op. cit.*, p. 705) thinks that the commemoration was postponed to the Sunday which followed Easter.

⁸ It was Irenæus who reminded Bishop Victor of this in 190: the bishops who were his predecessors had not expelled anyone from the Church because of this diversity or usage, and they sent the Eucharist to the members of the communities which followed the quartodeciman rule (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 15).

⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 16.

to the Bishop of Smyrna the honour of celebrating the Eucharist in a church in Rome.¹⁰

The Two Traditions

Next year, Polycarp was martyred; in 166 Anicetus died in his turn. The Easter question was not settled; on the contrary, the conference between the two bishops had brought into clearer light the traditions which underlay the two usages: the Asiatics based their position not merely on a book, even if this were the fourth gospel, but on the evangelist himself, the beloved disciple,¹¹ and on the apostles who, like him, had observed this custom. The Romans on their side went back through the series of their presbyters to the founders of their church, Peter and Paul.¹² There is certainly nothing surprising in the fact that in two different provinces, two apostles, or two groups of apostles, may have followed a different liturgical calendar and bequeathed it to their churches; and it was naturally very difficult to lead one of the two churches to give up the tradition it had received from the apostles.

Nevertheless, the sacrifice was necessary: the Church could not maintain indefinitely a duality of usages which involved not only a diversity of dates but also a divergence in interpretation of the paschal festival. As Baumstark has said, "on the one hand Easter Sunday was lacking, on the other, Good Friday; in Asia the Pasch was the crucifixion of Christ, in Rome it was his Resurrection."¹³

¹⁰ Schmidt (*op. cit.*, p. 594) thinks that Polycarp was in Rome at the time of Easter. But he does not think with Zahn that the two bishops celebrated the feast together. In that case Anicetus would have given way to Polycarp, which precisely he had felt himself unable to do. But Polycarp must have celebrated for the Asiatics, and Anicetus must have allowed him to do so in his church. This interpretation is ingenious, but it is not certain: it has not been proved that this discussion and the voyage of Polycarp really took place at Easter time.

¹¹ Cf. on this point the very fair remarks of Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 608 *et seq.*

¹² In his study on Easter in the early Christian Church (*Zeitschrift für wiss. Theol.*, N. F., Vol. XX, 4, p. 301), H. Koch maintains that the Roman Church in the time of Anicetus did not keep the Paschal festival at all. This error is well refuted by Schmidt (*op. cit.*, pp. 589 *et seq.*). Again, one must not infer from the text of Irenæus that Anicetus based himself on the custom of the presbyters who had preceded him, and not on an apostolic tradition. The mind of Irenæus is sufficiently clearly set forth in the *Adversus haereses*, which was certainly earlier than the letter to Victor.

¹³ *Theologische Revue*, 1921, p. 264, in a review of Schmidt's work. Baumstark adds (p. 265), in order to explain the origin of this double apostolic tradition. "In the last analysis, one is tempted to explain this difference by the different recollec-

Apart from apostolic authority, the Asiatic custom had in its favour its fidelity to the 14th Nisan, the day of the immolation of the paschal lamb and of the death of Christ. The Roman usage was based on the liturgical observance of the week, already familiar to Christians, who kept the day of the Lord's death on the Friday, and the day of his Resurrection on the Sunday.¹⁴

An apocryphal work composed in Asia some fifteen years after the interview between Polycarp and Anicetus confirms what has just been said concerning the quartodeciman usage, its origin and signification. Jesus talks with His apostles after His Resurrection, and foretells the arrest of Peter, at a time when they will be celebrating the Pasch:

"You will celebrate the anniversary of my death, that is, the Pasch. And they will throw one of you into prison for my name: and he will weep and lament, because while you are celebrating the Pasch, he will be in prison, and will not be able to celebrate the feast with you. And I will send my Power in the form of an angel, and the door of the prison will open, and he will come to you, to watch with you. . . ." And we said to him: "Lord, hast Thou not thyself drunk the chalice of the pasch? Is it then necessary that we should drink it anew?" And He replied to us: "Yes, until I come again from my Father with my wounds."¹⁵

The Easter festival is thus the commemoration of the passion of Christ; the Eucharist then celebrated recalls, together with the Last Supper, the bloody death of the Lord and the chalice He drank, and which all the martyrs must drink in their turn.¹⁶

tions and interpretations, on the part of Peter and John, of the crisis which lasted from the Last Supper till the morning of Easter": John, who had witnessed the death of Christ, the Paschal Lamb, made that the centre of the Christian Pasch; Peter insisted rather on the Resurrection, of which he was one of the first witnesses.

¹⁴ The quartodeciman usage necessarily meant that the solemnity of the death of Jesus and the fast would sometimes fall on the Sunday. The other Christians were shocked at this. Cf. Augustine, *De haeresibus*, xxix, speaking of the quartodecimans: "Non nisi quarta decima luna pascha celebrant, quilibet septem dierum occurat dies et, si dies dominicus occurrerit, ipso die jejunt et vigilant" (quoted by Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 701, n. 3).

¹⁵ *Epistola apostolorum*, xv.

¹⁶ In 155, Polycarp on his funeral pile said to the Lord: "I bless Thee because Thou hast judged me worthy . . . to take part among the martyrs in the chalice of thy Christ." Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 702 and n. 1.

The Judaisers at Laodicea

These memories and traditions were authentically Christian; but side by side with the quartodeciman usage, and under cover of it, we find about the year 170 a Judaising tendency which troubled certain churches of Asia Minor, and in particular the church of Laodicea. To deal with the danger, Melito wrote concerning the Pasch, "under Servilius Paulus, proconsul of Asia, in the time when Sagaris was martyred."¹⁷ At the same date Apollinaris of Hierapolis, who, like Melito, was attached to the quartodeciman usage, also took up his pen to combat the Judaisers.¹⁸ Clement of Alexandria and Hippolytus wrote books concerning the Pasch which have not come down to us, but which seem equally to have aimed at excluding the Judaising observance of the paschal lamb. From all this Duchesne infers that "in the churches of Asia, Alexandria and even of Rome there was, towards the end of the second century, a revival in favour of the Jewish custom of the paschal lamb, and everywhere, in the churches of the quartodeciman rite as in those of the Sunday celebration, this revival was condemned, with the help of the Gospel of St. John, and the texts of the Synoptic Gospels were explained in a similar manner."¹⁹

Blastus

This fermentation and confusion which affected the whole Church added to the danger of the divergence of Easter customs. They revealed the danger in the quartodeciman practice: some people could thereby be drawn aside to Judaising observances. The schism of Blastus at Rome itself made this danger still more apparent. It explains the vigorous character of Victor's intervention. As Duchesne remarks, "Certainly the quartodeciman observance was

¹⁷ These lines are taken by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, IV, xxvi, 3) from the treatise of Melito. The treatise itself is lost: it consisted of two books.

¹⁸ Duchesne (*art. cit.*, p. 9) quotes this fragment preserved in the *Paschal Chronicle*, prooemium, Migne, P.G., Vol. XCII, 80: "There are some who through ignorance stir up quarrels concerning this. They are excusable, ignorance is not a sin: they are to be, not accused, but rather instructed. They think that on the 14th day the Lord ate the Lamb with his disciples, and that He suffered on the great day of the Azymes; they explain Matthew in accordance with their view. But this system cannot be harmonised with the Law; it introduces a contradiction between the gospels. The 14th day is the true Pasch of the Lord, the great sacrifice; in place of the Lamb, we have the Son of God . . ."

¹⁹ *Art. cit.*, p. 11.

one thing, and the Mosaic rite of the lamb another, but it is evident that the quartodeciman observance provided, as it were, a link with this latter rite. . . . The conduct of the Pope was therefore logical and wise, and the proof of this is that it was supported by the whole Church.”²⁰

Initiative of Pope Victor

Realising the gravity of the question, the bishop of Rome requested the holding of provincial synods.²¹ Everywhere save in Asia, the bishops “decided that the mystery of the Resurrection of the Saviour from the dead was to be celebrated on no other day than the Sunday, and that only on that day was the Paschal fast to end.”²² Eusebius tells us that the documents of the case comprised letters from the bishops in Palestine, bishops assembled in Rome, bishops in Pontus, the churches of Gaul, in which Irenæus was a bishop, and bishops of Osroene, as well as individual letters from Bacchyle, Bishop of Corinth, and several others. All were unanimous.²³

Resistance of the Asiatics

In the face of this very general agreement of the Christian churches, the Asiatics maintained their particular tradition. Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, wrote in their name to the bishop of Rome:

We carefully keep the Paschal observance, without addition or subtraction.

²⁰ *Art. cit.*, p. 13. On the relations between the quartodeciman usage and Judaism, cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 622 *et seq.*

²¹ This initiative on the part of Rome is expressly affirmed by Polycrates of Ephesus in the case of the Asiatic synod: “I could make mention of the bishops who are here with me: you have requested me to convoke them; I have done so” (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 8). The other synods mentioned by Eusebius (*ibid.*, xxiii, 2-4) probably resulted from the same initiative at the same time. It has been suggested that the others were convoked by the Pope only after the reply of the Asiatics. The text of Eusebius does not enable us to settle this minor point, but it is much more likely that the Pope, knowing the dispositions of Polycrates, decided from the first to get the views of the other churches.

²² *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii, 2.

²³ On these synods, cf. Hefele-Leclercq, *Hist. des conciles*, Vol. I, p. 150; Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, pp. 271 *et seq.*

In Asia great lights were extinguished which will rise again in the day of the Coming of the Lord, when He shall come with glory from heaven and seek out all the saints: Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who was buried at Hierapolis, together with his two daughters who grew old in virginity (a third, who lived in the Holy Spirit, rests at Ephesus). Also John, who reposed on the Lord's bosom, and was a priest wearing the golden breastplate, and a martyr and a doctor: he is buried at Ephesus. Then Polycarp, who was Bishop at Smyrna and a martyr; and Thraseas of Eumenia, bishop and martyr, who is buried at Smyrna. Need we recall Sagaris, bishop and martyr, who is buried at Laodicea, and the blessed Papirius, and the eunuch Melito who lived altogether in the Holy Spirit and who lies at Sardis, waiting till the Lord comes from heaven on the day when he will rise again from the dead? All these have kept the date of the fourteenth day for the celebration of the Pasch, according to the Gospel, deviating in nothing, but following the rule of the faith.

And I also, I, Polycrates, the least of you all, I do as my relatives have taught me, some of whom were my masters; for there have been seven bishops in my family, and I am the eighth. Always my relatives observed the day in which the people put away fermented bread. For myself, then, my brethren, I who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord and have conversed with the brethren of the whole world, and have read the holy Scripture from end to end—I do not allow myself to be affrighted by endeavours to terrify us, for those greater than I have written: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

I could make mention of the bishops who are here with me: You have requested me to convoke them: I have done so. If I were to write down all their names, the list would be a long one. All know me, poor man that I am; they have approved my letter, knowing that I have not white hairs in vain, and that I have always lived in Christ Jesus.²⁴

This bitter and impassioned letter reveals the gravity of the conflict. In 154 the hopeful visit of Polycarp to Anicetus had failed to end it, in spite of the veneration of the bishop of Rome for the aged bishop of Smyrna; in 190 the urgent and threatening intervention of Victor seems to have collapsed in presence of the tenacity of Polycrates and his Asiatic colleagues. These stiffened their attitude, and at Rome itself their resistance found support in the group of Asiatic Christians. Blastus decided to break with Victor; Irenæus, himself an Asiatic but one who had adopted the liturgical

²⁴ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 2-8.

usage of the Romans and was anxious for the peace of the Church, wrote a letter to Blastus on the schism.²⁵

Intervention of Irenæus

About the same date, Irenæus wrote to Pope Victor on the same subject, and also to many other bishops.²⁶ Angered by the vehement letter from Polycrates, the bishop of Rome had decided to carry out his threats and excommunicate the Christian communities of all Asia and the neighbouring churches as heretics. So severe a measure, aimed at churches so venerable and so numerous, and which constituted one of the chief centres of Christianity, "did not please all the bishops." Several, whose letters were known to Eusebius, made very strong remonstrances; "Irenæus, in the name of the brethren he governed in Gaul, also wrote. In the first place he affirmed that one should keep the Roman custom, and always celebrate the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord on a Sunday. Then he respectfully exhorted Victor not to excommunicate whole churches because of their fidelity to an ancient tradition." Lastly, he recalled the previous facts as we know them, the long toleration on the part of Victor's predecessors, the fraternal meeting of Polycarp and Anicetus, characterised by mutual deference, and he urged the Pope to live likewise in peace with the Asiatics: "even if there is a difference in the observation of the fast," he said, "the faith is the same."

Abatement of the Conflict

This respectful adjuration was listened to; Victor had the good sense to follow the advice of the Bishop of Lyons, and the Church

²⁵ This letter is mentioned by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xx, 1) when speaking of the letter to Florinus, just as he recalls together the fall of Florinus and that of Blastus (*ibid.*, V, xv). Blastus very likely belonged, like Florinus, to the group of Asiatics in Rome. But his fall was not of the same nature. Florinus was led astray into Gnosticism, and Irenæus wrote him a letter "on the monarchy, or that God is not the author of evil." To Blastus he wrote concerning schism. In point of fact, pseudo-Tertullian (liii) represents Blastus as a Judaising quartodeciman. Cf. Duchesne, *Origines chrétiennes*, p. 244; La Piana, *The Roman Church at the end of the Second Century*, in *Harvard Theological Review*, 1925, p. 213; Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 620-622.

²⁶ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 11-18.

to-day is still grateful to St. Irenæus for having been a peacemaker.²⁷

At what date did the Asiatics adopt the Roman custom? We do not know; ²⁸ history manifests no further trace of the controversy which we have found at the end of the second century. There were still quartodecimans later, but these were heretics, regarded as such by all the churches. The Easter question discussed at the Council of Nicæa was quite a different one. The celebration of Easter on the Sunday was accepted by all: the only question that remained was whether, in determining the date of Easter, the Jewish reckoning was to be followed, as was the custom at Antioch, or whether it should be calculated independently, as was done elsewhere, and for instance at Alexandria and Rome. This last method was the one decided upon, and the Church was finally freed from the Synagogue.²⁹

The sad conflict which we have outlined has shown once more the attachment of the churches to the apostolic tradition; it has also shown that the love of unity is still more powerful than fidelity to traditional customs; and we have seen that more and more this Catholic unity was ensured by the communion of all the churches with the See of Rome.

§ 2. THE DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSIES AND THE SCHISM OF HIPPOLYTUS

Character of the Doctrinal Controversies at the End of the Second Century

In the latter half of the second century, several heretics broke away from the Christian Church: the Gnostics, the Marcionites, and the Montanists. These events led to a reaction both theological and disciplinary. Towards the end of the century, new dangers provided the occasion for a new doctrinal progress. The heresiarchs

²⁷ It is with this encomium that Eusebius concludes his account of this conflict (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiv, 18). The Church echoes it still to-day, in her liturgy (see the Collect for the feast of St. Irenæus).

²⁸ Such is the ultimate conclusion of the long study of Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 725.

²⁹ This subject has been finally clarified by Duchesne in his article in the *Revue des quest. hist.*, Vol. xxviii, pp. 16-42. On the Paschal reckoning of Hippolytus, cf. *infra*, pp. 742-743.

who at that time menaced Christian doctrine did not separate themselves from the communion of the Church as Valentine, Marcion or Montanus had done: they sought to remain within her, and claimed to retain her doctrine. But the interpretation they gave to it transformed it.

These heretics may be divided into two groups, of very different character.¹ Some attacked Christological doctrine, denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, and regarded him only as a man chosen and adopted by God; these are called Adoptianists. The others attacked the Trinitarian doctrine, and in order to safeguard the divine unity, or, as they called it, the "monarchy," they denied the distinction between the divine Persons; these are called Monarchianists.

Adoptianism

Adoptianism,² which degraded Christ to the level of the adopted gods imagined by paganism, struck at the heart of the Christian faith. At the same time it could count not only on the connivance of Christians recently or badly converted, but also on the sympathy of the Judaisers. Cerinthus and the Ebionites of Palestine had previously professed this diminished Christianity;³ but apart from these heretical circles, Adoptianism had sometimes menaced ignorant and imprudent Christians; thus the language, if not the thought, of Hermas displays this contamination.⁴ When in the time

¹ This profound difference did not prevent these two groups from sometimes supporting each other: by denying the distinction between the divine persons, the Monarchianists provided a basis for Adoptianism. We shall see this in the history of Paul of Samosata (see Bk. IV).

² Adoptianism is made known to us mainly by Hippolytus, who opposed it in several of his works:

(a) *Syntagma* (or *Summary*) against all the heresies: a work prior to the *Philosophumena*, which mentions it (I, proem., p. 1, i, 20). It is mentioned by Photius (*Bibl.*, cod. 121), but is now lost. It was utilised by pseudo-Tertullian, Epiphanius, and Philastrius. On this book, cf. D'Alès, *Hippolyte*, pp. 71-77; Lipsius, *Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius*, Vienna, 1865, pp. 33-70. On Theodotus and Adoptianism, see pseudo-Tertullian, *Haer.*, xxiii, *De praescript.*, liii; Epiphanius, *Haer.*, liv; Philastrius, 1. For a comparison of these sources, see Lipsius, pp. 235-237.

(b) *Philosophumena*, especially VII, xxxv; IX, iii, 12; X, xxiii, 27.

(c) *Adversus haeresim Noeti*, iii (possibly forming part of the *Syntagma*).

(d) *Contra Artemon* (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii). On this work cf. p. 727, n. 5.

³ It is, in fact, to the school "of the Gnostics and of Cerinthus and Ebion" that Hippolytus attaches the teaching of Theodotus. *Philos.*, VII, xxxv, 1. On Cerinthus, cf. *supra*, p. 620-621.

⁴ Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 453.

of Pope Zephyrinus (197-217) the Adoptianists began to propagate their heresy in Rome, they endeavoured to give it an apostolic origin: "They say that all the elders and apostles themselves received and taught what they themselves teach to-day, and that the true teaching was kept until the time of Victor, the thirteenth bishop of Rome from Peter, but that since Zephyrinus his successor it has been altered."⁵

To these pretensions, Hippolytus opposes "the divine Scriptures" and the Catholic writers, witnesses to tradition and much earlier than Victor: "Justin, Miltiades, Tatian, Clement, and many others":

All these writers speak of Christ as a God. Who is unaware of the books of Irenæus, Melito, and others, which proclaim that Christ is God and man? Who does not know the numerous canticles and hymns written by faithful brethren from the beginning, in which they sing of Christ as the Word of God, and hail him as God? How then can it be said that the real sentiment of the Church was declared so many years ago and that those who lived before Victor taught in the way they maintain? How is it that they can unblushingly utter such lies about Victor? They know perfectly well that Victor excommunicated the corrupt Theodotus, the leader and father of this apostasy denying God, and the first to say that Christ was a mere man.⁶

Theodotus

This Theodotus, if we may believe Epiphanius (LIV, 1), was an instructed and learned Christian who had, however, denied the faith in consequence of persecution. He belonged to Byzantium, but not being able to bear his shame there, he went to Rome. One day

⁵ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 3. This text is taken by Eusebius from "a work against the heresy of Artemon." This work, quoted at length by Eusebius in this chapter, was utilised also by Theodoret, *Haer. fab.*, III, iv, 5, who calls it the *Little Labyrinth*. This text, compared with a statement of Photius (*Biblioth.*, 48), has led some to set in this treatise a work by Hippolytus. Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxii-xxxiv, and 108-109. Against this identification, Bardy (*Paul de Samosate*, p. 490, n. 2) brings forward a text of the Council of Antioch in 268 which condemned Paul of Samosate, and invited him ironically to send letters of communion to Artemon (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 17). The objection does not seem decisive: Artemon could have been opposed by Hippolytus towards the end of his literary career and still be living thirty-five years later. Cf. Kidd, *op. cit.*, p. 365. "Artemas, or Artemon, continued their tradition in Rome, c. 235; and, though we know little about him, he may be regarded as the link between the Adoptianism of the Theodotians and of Paul of Samosate."

⁶ *Ibid.* V, xxviii, 4-6.

he met a Byzantine who reproached him for his apostasy. He replied: "It is not God I have denied, but a man." Pressed to explain himself, he added that Christ was only a man, and that to have denied him was not damnable, since Jesus himself said in the Gospel: "If anyone blaspheme the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him, but he who blasphemeth the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven."

Victor expelled Theodotus from the Church.⁷ This condemnation did not stifle the sect: though few in numbers and without following, but proud of their culture, these new doctors searched the Scriptures for what seemed to them to favour their view, leaving aside what condemned it.⁸ They went farther still, "not fearing to corrupt the divine Scriptures and to reject the rule of faith,"⁹ and so, going outside Scripture and Christian Tradition, they took refuge in their own reasonings:

They care not about what the holy books say, but they laboriously seek out a form of reasoning which would support their impiety. If one objects to them a text of holy Scripture, they ask if this can be made into a conjunctive or disjunctive syllogism. Leaving aside the divine Scriptures, they cultivate geometry; they are of the earth, they speak of the earth, and know not Him who comes from above. Euclid thus geometrises actively amongst some of them; Aristotle and Theophrastus receive their admiration; Galen is almost worshipped by others. They misuse the art of unbelievers in favour of their heresy; with impious wickedness they alter the simple faith of the divine Scriptures. . . . They are not afraid to lay hands on the Scriptures, saying that they do so to correct them. Anyone who wishes can ascertain that I am not calumniating them. For if one compares their copies (of the Scripture) with one another, one will find them very different. Those of Asclepiades do not agree with those of Theodotus. . . . Some

⁷ Harnack (*Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 709), remarks: "This is the first instance known to us of a Christian holding to the rule of faith and nevertheless regarded as a heretic," and he adds in a note: "It is significant that this took place in Rome." We cannot regard this as an innovation, nor such severity as peculiar to the Roman church: witness the attitude towards heresy taken up by St. John, St. Ignatius, and St. Polycarp.

⁸ Philastrius: "They make use of the texts of the Scriptures which speak of Christ as a man, but leave aside those which speak of him as God." Epiphanius has transmitted to us a few fragments of their exegesis; it is to be noted that they accepted the Johannine writings. This implies that already at that time, in spite of the isolated denials by Gaius, the Canon of the New Testament was generally unquestioned. Cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 710 and n. 1.

⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 13.

even have disdained to make these falsifications, but have simply rejected the law and the prophets, and under the pretext of grace¹⁰ they have cast themselves to the bottom of the pit of perdition by an immoral and impious teaching.¹¹

Rationalistic Character of Adoptianism

This description of Adoptianism is extremely interesting: it reveals at the beginning of the third century an acute rationalistic crisis. None of the preceding heresies had manifested this character. All laid claim to a more sublime knowledge of God; they based themselves on secret traditions and revelations. There is nothing like that here, but instead we have Hellenic science, Euclid, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and conjunctive and disjunctive syllogisms.¹² Later on we shall find the same arid and haughty rationalism in Paul of Samosata, and later still, in the Arians; it is a feature of the corrupt Christianity which sees in Jesus only a man.

Nevertheless, the disciples of the first Theodotus, the other Theodotus, called the banker, and Asclepiodotus, tried to give to their little sect the form of a church; they engaged as bishop a Roman confessor, Natalis, at a salary of 150 deniers a month.¹³ This unfortunate man was warned by visions, which he disregarded; finally, if we may believe Hippolytus, he was whipped by angels, then repented, and with great difficulty obtained his reconciliation.¹⁴

¹⁰ Grapin has omitted this word "grace" in his text of Eusebius, but wrongly, in our view. Cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I. p. 713.

¹¹ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 13-19.

¹² These syllogisms belong to the Stoic logic. The conjunctive syllogism (*ἀξίωμα συνημμένον*) is conditional in form, for instance, "If it is light, one sees clearly": the disjunctive is the dilemma, for instance: "It is either day or night." Cf. J. von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, II. *Chrysippi fragmenta logica*, Leipzig, 1903, pp. 68 *et seq.*

¹³ At this period we find clerics paid by the community only in the heretical sects. Apollonius makes this complaint about Montanus: "He paid salaries to those who preached his doctrine, so that gluttony should make the teaching of his words prevail" (*Hist. eccles.*, V. xviii, 2). Cf. Kidd, *op. cit.*, p. 363. In the time of St. Cyprian, these salaries were in usage in the Catholic Church (*Epist.* xxxiv, 4; xxxix, 5).

¹⁴ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 8-13. Hippolytus (*Philos.*, VII, xxxvi, 1) says that Theodotus the banker was the author of a new form of heresy: "He says that Melchisedech is the supreme Power, and is greater than Christ, and that Christ is in his image." Cf. Epiphanius, *Haer.*, LV; fragment of Eustathius of Antioch, edited by Cavallera, *S. Eustathii in Lazarum homilia* (1905), pp. xii-xiv: "Trying

Artemon

After these first upholders of Adoptianism, the sect was represented, until the time of Paul of Samosata, by Artemon. In the West it disappeared as a sect, but the rationalism from which it arose survived it, and gave it new life over and over again.¹⁵ In the East its persistence was more marked in Paul of Samosata and then in the Arians. "Arianism is none other than a compromise between Adoptianism and the theology of the Word, and this compromise shows that, from the end of the third century, any Christology which did not recognise the personal pre-existence of Christ was impossible in the Church."¹⁶

Monarchianism

Monarchianism¹⁷ was at the commencement of the third century a greater danger for the Church than Adoptianism. The teaching of Theodotus was a direct affront to Christian sentiment, and could not become popular in an age of lively faith. On the other hand, Monarchianism appealed to the masses by its zeal for the two great

to prove that Melchisedech is greater than Christ, they bring forward in support the Scripture text: 'Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech.' 'How,' they say, 'could Christ be greater than the one whose image is reproduced by his priesthood, and in whose order he is?' Others again err by saying that Melchisedech is the Holy Spirit. As for ourselves, we say that Melchisedech was a man like us, and was not greater than Christ or John the Baptist, and that he is not the Holy Spirit." Cf. Bardy, *Melchisédech dans la tradition patristique*, in *Revue biblique*, 1926, pp. 496-509; 197, pp. 25-45; article *Melchisédech* in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*

¹⁵ We may recall amongst others this text of St. Augustine, *Confessions*, VII, xix, 25: "I regarded Christ only as a man of eminent wisdom, and who was without equal, especially because the Master, having been born miraculously of a Virgin, seemed to have received from God an exceptional authority in order to teach us by his example to despise temporal things and strive for immortality. But as to the mystery of the Word made flesh, I could not even imagine this."

¹⁶ Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 732.

¹⁷ The main sources are Hippolytus (*Adversus Noetum*, about 200-210; *Syntagma*; *Philosophumena*, after 222) and Tertullian (*Adversus Praxean*, after 213). Cf. Hagemann, *Die Roemische Kirche und ihr Einfluss auf Disciplin und Dogma in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Freiburg, 1864, pp. 90-103, 119-125, 147-275; Harnack, article *Monarchianismus* in *Realencycl. f. protest. Theol.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 303-336; *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 697-753; D'Alès, *Théologie de saint Hippolyte*, pp. 8-35; Ph. Kneir, *Der Monarchianismus und die roem. Kirche im dritten Jahrh. in Katholik*, 1905, Vol. II, pp. 1-15, 112-128; 182-201, 266-282.

dogmas of the divine unity and the divinity of Jesus Christ.¹⁸ Tertullian was annoyed at the timidity of the simple who were alarmed at the affirmation of the Trinity, and who thought that the divine unity could be defended only by turning away from this "economy." Origen in turn was sometimes scornful of "the mass of those who are regarded as believers" and who "know only the Christ according to the flesh"; with more justice he elsewhere remarks on the attraction which Monarchianism might have for the simple: "They do not wish to seem to affirm two gods; they do not wish to deny the divinity of the Saviour; then they end by admitting merely two names, and one single person."¹⁹

At that time, when theological language was still somewhat undefined, and in which terms which were to become technical, such as *substance*, *hypostasis*, and *person*, had still the vague meaning given them in current speech, it was almost impossible to avoid all ambiguity.²⁰ For the same reason, a historian cannot now give to the theological conceptions which then confronted each other

¹⁸ Cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Prax.*, III (*Corpus Script. Eccles. Lat.*, Vol. XLVII, 230): "All the simple-minded, not to say the stupid and the ignorant—always very numerous among the faithful—think that the rule of faith converts us from the polytheism of the world to the only true God, and do not realise that, while we must, of course, believe in the one God, it must be with his 'economy.' They are alarmed, thinking that the economy introduces number, that the Trinity threatens the Unity, whereas on the contrary, the Unity, making the Trinity to arise from itself, is not destroyed thereby but organised. Also, they repeat that we preach two or three gods, but that they adore one only God, as if it were not a heresy to restrict the Unity other than should be done, and as if it were not the truth to unfold the Trinity as must be done. 'We hold the Monarchy,' they say, for that is how they speak, even those who speak Latin, and they repeat this word with such energy that one might think they understand the Monarchy as well as they enunciate it." In an altogether different context, Origen is led to pass on the simple-minded a similar judgment. Distinguishing between four classes of people believing in God, he puts in the first class those "who share in the Logos who was at the beginning, the Logos God"; in the second, those "who know only Jesus Christ and Him crucified, thinking that the Logos made flesh is the whole Logos; these know Christ only according to the flesh, such are the mass of those regarded as believers" (*In Joann.*, II, iii, 27-31). On this passage, cf. Bk. IV, ch. xxviii, § 2.

¹⁹ *In Titum* (Migne, P.G., Vol. XIV, 1304). This text, together with the two preceding ones, is mentioned by Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 735, n. 1 and n. 3.

²⁰ To realise this, it suffices to read in the Latin translation by Rufinus, the text of Origen to which we have just referred: ". . . uti ne videantur duos deos dicere, neque rursus negare Salvatoris deitatem, unam eandemque substantiam Patris ac Filii asseverant, id est, duo quidem nomina secundum diversitatem causarum recipientes, unam tamen upostasim subsistere, id est, unam personam duobus nominibus subjacentem."

more precision than they in fact possessed. Another and still greater difficulty arises from the sources, and their nature. We know of this conflict only through Hippolytus and Tertullian, two impassioned controversialists: ²¹ when they wrote the books upon which we have to rely, Hippolytus was a schismatic and head of a little church in Rome, and Tertullian was a Montanist, a violent opponent of the church of the "psychics" and of the bishop of Rome. We must listen to these witnesses, the only ones which there are to hear, but we shall accept what they say only after a careful examination. We shall not hastily conclude from these diatribes that Monarchianism was throughout a whole generation the official doctrine of the Church of Rome.²²

Noetus

Like Adoptianism, the Monarchian heresy arose in Asia, and from thence travelled to Rome. Hippolytus tells us about its beginnings.²³ After remarking that Noetus was a native of Smyrna²⁴ who, urged on by pride, thought himself inspired by the Holy Spirit, he thus describes his teaching:

Christ, he says, is the Father himself, and it was the Father himself who was born, suffered and died. As for himself, he claimed to be Moses, and that his brother was Aaron. The blessed presbyters summoned him and interrogated him before the whole Church. At first he denied, then later, having thought of some equivocations and gathered together a few accomplices of his error, he decided to maintain his teaching openly. The blessed presbyters summoned him again, and

²¹ We must also remark that these two witnesses are not completely in agreement (cf. D'Alès, *Saint Hippolyte*, pp. 16-18). Moreover, Tertullian is directly referring only to Praxeas, of whom Hippolytus says nothing (cf. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 734, n. 1). Hagemann (*op. cit.*, pp. 234-256) solves this difficulty by identifying Praxeas with Callistus, but this identification is not without its difficulties (cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 19).

²² This thesis has been maintained by Harnack, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 735.

²³ The book *Contra Noetum*, from which we take the extract which follows in the text, seems to have formed part of the *Syntagma*, now lost, written about the year 200. Twenty-five or thirty years later, in the *Philosophumena*, written after the death of Callistus (222), Hippolytus returned on two occasions to his polemic against Monarchianism. These works we study later on; they display a riper theological thought, but also, as against the bishops of Rome, Zephyrinus and above all Callistus, they breathe a hatred not yet displayed in the book against Noetus. Cf. D'Alès, *Saint Hippolyte*, pp. 22-23.

²⁴ *Adv. Noet.*, I; *Philos.*, IX, vii. Epiphanius says he taught at Ephesus (*Haer.*, lviii, 1).

convicted him. But he resisted them, saying: "Is it then a sin to glorify Christ?" The presbyters replied: "We also confess truly one sole God; we confess the Christ; we confess the Son who suffered as He suffered, who died as He died, who rose again the third day, who is at the right hand of the Father, who will come to judge the living and the dead. And this we say as we have learnt." Then, having convicted him, they expelled him from the Church. But he was so swollen with pride that he founded a sect.²⁵

We notice here, on the occasion of the second and decisive appearance of Noetus before the presbyters, the appeal to the rule of faith, that is, the baptismal creed, confessing one only God, but confessing also the Son of God and all the mysteries of his life;²⁶ the traditional faith, which the presbyters repeat as they have received it. Noetus does not continue the discussion on that ground: he hardens his heart, and departs. The arguments he uses seem, according to Hippolytus, to be texts of the Old Testament: "I am the God of your fathers, you shall have no other god but me" (*Exod.* iii, 6; xx, 3), "I am the first and the last, and after me there is no other" (*Isaias* xlv, 6); and some words of the Lord: "I and the Father are one" (*John* x, 30), "He who has seen me, has seen the Father: thou believest not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (*ibid.*, xiv, 8-9); and again this text of St. Paul: ". . . the fathers, of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is the supreme God, blessed for ever" (*Rom.* ix, 5). From this he infers: "The Father is Christ; He is the Son; He was born; He suffered; He rose again."²⁷

²⁵ *Adv. Noet.*, 1.

²⁶ The insistence with which the reality of the passion and death of the Son of God are affirmed, recalls the profession of faith of St. Ignatius: "He really suffered persecution under Pontius Pilate, was really crucified . . ." (*Trall.*, ix).

²⁷ In addition to these Scriptural texts appealed to by Noetus, it seems that we can perceive, by the refutations by Hippolytus, vestiges of patristic arguments. It is difficult not to see an allusion to St. Ignatius and to St. Irenæus in passages like this: "They say that the same God is the Demiurge and the Father of all things, who willed to appear to the just of former times, although He is invisible, for when He is not seen, He is invisible (when He is seen He is visible); He is incomprehensible when He does not will to be comprehended, comprehensible when He is comprehended. So, according to the same reasoning, He is perceptible and imperceptible, ingenerate and engendered, immortal and mortal" (*Philos.*, IX, x, 9-10; cf. X, xxvii, 1-2). Cf. Ignatius, *Ephes.*, vii, 2, and *Pol.*, iii, 2; in these two texts Ignatius contrasts the two series of attributes which belong to the Son of God according to his divine nature and his human nature (cf. *Hist. du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 294). This theology was not Monarchian, but the contrasts it set forth might provide Noetus with the apparent support he was

These texts suffice to show the bearing of the new heresy and its character: it excluded from God all distinction of persons, and as a consequence it perverted the Gospel. It not only contradicted the few texts recalled by Hippolytus,²⁸ but above all it ran counter to the most evident feature of the religion of Jesus: his devoted and most loving submission to the will of his Father, his prayer, his sacrifice, and the whole work of redemption. These denials were bound to appear intolerable to thoughtful Christians; others might be led astray by a theological construction so simple in appearance and so manifestly opposed both to the polytheism of the pagans and to the impiety of the Adoptianists. This contrast between Noetus and Theodotus must be stressed; later on we shall find the two heresies combining, and the Unitarians adopting the Christology of Theodotus and Artemon. But that did not happen at the beginning: Noetus thought his theology defended the honour of Christ: his first reply to his judges was: "Is it then a sin to glorify Christ?"

Praxeas

The first to endeavour to propagate in Rome this error from Asia was Praxeas. Hippolytus does not mention him, but Tertullian makes him known to us. His book, written after 213, takes us back some twenty years to the first attempts of the heretic. In Asia, Praxeas had suffered for the faith; he had passed some time in prison. When he arrived in Rome he traded on his position as a

seeking for his teaching. So also the texts of Irenæus on God as naturally invisible but seen by grace: ". . . That which is impossible to men is possible to God. For man of himself sees not God, but God, because He wills it, is seen by men, by those whom He wills, when He wills, as He wills, for God can do all things" (IV, xx, 5). "He who is incomprehensible and imperceptible and invisible has made Himself to be seen and grasped and comprehended by his faithful, in order to vivify by faith those who comprehend and see Him" (*ibid.*). Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 534-535. These comparisons will have greater significance the more it is found possible to see in them the influence of an Asiatic theology which Noetus, a native of Smyrna, had doubtless falsified but had certainly known and utilised. But while admitting the value of these comparisons, we must beware of inferring, with Loofs and Kroymann, that this Asiatic theology was Modalist. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 306-308. Lastly, we must note that these texts appeared in the *Philosophumena*, but not as yet in the *Adversus Noetum*.

²⁸ *Adv. Noet.*, ch. vii: "He was sent by the Father, and He goes towards the Father" (816).

confessor in order to spread his doctrine, and, what made him still more blameworthy in the eyes of Tertullian, he became an opponent of the Montanists. He found the bishop of Rome favourably disposed to the prophecies of Montanus; he caused him to change his mind, by telling him what he knew personally about the prophets and churches of Asia, and by reminding him of previous decisions of his predecessors. "In this way Praxeas accomplished two diabolical things: he expelled prophecy and he implanted heresy; he put to flight the Paraclete and he crucified the Father."²⁹

Progress of the Heresy in Africa

From Rome the error had been taken into Africa.³⁰ The seed had germinated but it had been stifled, thanks to the efforts of Tertullian while still a Catholic; Praxeas had to sign a retraction which the Church still possessed when the *Adversus Praxean* was being written. After a short period of silence, the heresy burst out afresh. Tertullian in the meantime had, as he puts it, "recognised the Paraclete, and had separated from the psychicals"; but he remained attached to belief in the Trinity, and wrote in its defence.³¹

Hippolytus and Callistus

At Rome, however, the menace continued. Hippolytus describes its development in accounts full of impassioned accusations against

²⁹ The Modalists, who effaced all personal distinction between the Father and the Son, held in consequence that the Father was crucified, whence their name of Patripassians.

³⁰ Did Praxeas himself go to Africa? Noeldechen thinks he did (*Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. V, 2, p. 162, n. 5); so also Kneib (*Katholik*, 1905, Vol. II, p. 3). Tertullian does not assert it expressly (cf. D'Alès, *Tertullien*, p. 68, n. 2).

³¹ The theological work of Tertullian will be discussed later on, pp. 673-683. The account of the doings of Praxeas, which we have taken from Tertullian, enables us to understand the silence of Hippolytus, the teaching of Praxeas in Rome was prior to the activity of Hippolytus; the heretic had retracted, and it was a new outbreak of Monarchianism which some twenty years later led Tertullian to recall all these facts. Who was the bishop whom Praxeas had led astray on his arrival in Rome? Harnack (*Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 742) thinks it was Eleutherius, and he infers from this that during four successive pontificates (Eleutherius, Victor, Zephyrinus, Callistus), a Modalist Christology was held by the bishop of Rome. We shall discuss this statement below; as for Eleutherius, we think he must be left outside the conflict; Praxeas invoked against the Montanist prophecy, in the presence of the bishop of Rome, "the authority of his predecessors", this cannot apply to Eleutherius, who was the first who had to face this question.

the bishops Zephyrinus and Callistus. Noetus had not visited Rome, but his teaching was represented there by his "deacon and disciple"³² Epigonus: "he lived in Rome and there spread his impious doctrine." He in turn had as disciple a certain Cleomenes, who had a school. The bishop Zephyrinus, whom Hippolytus represents as a fool and a miser, allowed all those who wished to hear the teaching of Cleomenes. Zephyrinus had as adviser the deacon Callistus, the object of all the hatred of Hippolytus. Protected by the bishop and his deacon, the school of Cleomenes attracted many adherents; in this group one man stood out who was bolder than the others: Sabellius, later on the leader of a sect to which he gave his name. Amongst all these people Callistus, according to Hippolytus, played a double game: he allowed the orthodox to think that he was of their opinion; he said the same to Sabellius, and thereby lost him, for Hippolytus assures us that Sabellius was not too obstinate: "When he exhorted him, he did not harden his heart; but when he found himself once more alone with Callistus, he allowed himself to be led away into the doctrine of Cleomenes, as Callistus told him that he also held this." "As for Zephyrinus, Callistus pushed him forward, and made him say to the people: 'I know only one God, Christ Jesus, and apart from Him no other who was born or could suffer'; and at other times: 'It was not the Father who died, but the Son.' And thus he fostered discord among the people."

Hippolytus claims that he saw through his adversary's deceit, and that Callistus was furious in consequence, treating Hippolytus and his friends as ditheists. On the death of Zephyrinus, Callistus became bishop of Rome (217-222). He began by excommunicating Sabellius for fear of Hippolytus, and to put on an appearance of orthodoxy. "Nevertheless," continues Hippolytus, "as all the world knew that Callistus accused us of ditheism, and as moreover Sabellius reproached him for being a turncoat, he invented the following heresy":

The Word is the Son himself, the Father himself. There is only one and the same indivisible spirit, except in name. The Father is not one thing and the Son another: they are one and the same thing, the divine Spirit which fills all things above and below. The Spirit, made flesh in the Virgin, is not other than the Father, but one and the same

³² Are these two terms to be understood in their technical sense? We do not know. Perhaps Hippolytus wished merely to indicate thereby the dependance of Epigonus upon Noetus.

thing. Hence Scripture says: "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" (*John* xiv, 11). The visible element, the man, is the Son; and the spirit which dwells in the Son, is the Father. I will not speak of two gods, the Father and the Son, but of one alone. For the Father who rested in the Son, having assumed flesh, divinised it in uniting it to himself, and made it one with himself, so that the names of Father and Son apply to one and the same God. The personality of God cannot be duplicated; consequently, the Father suffered with the Son.³³

For he will not say that the Father suffered, and that there is only one person, but he wishes to avoid blasphemy against the Father—this insensate and unstable man, who invents blasphemies from end to end for the sole pleasure of speaking against the truth, and who is not ashamed to fall now into the system of Sabellius, then into that of Theodotus.

³³ *Philos.* IX, xii, 16-19. Hippolytus then criticises Callistus for forgiving sinners. In Book X he returns to the Trinitarian doctrine of his enemy. X, xxvii, 3-4: "This heresy (of Noetus) has been defended by Callistus, whose life we have exactly related, and who himself brought forth a heresy: he started from that, and confessed that there is only one (god), the Father and Creator of the universe; He is Son inasmuch as he is so named, and receives this appellation, but in essence (*ousia*) there is only (one spirit); for, says he, God is not a spirit other than the Word, nor the Word other than God: there is therefore only one single person, distinguished in name but not in essence. He says that this Word is the sole God, and that He was incarnate. And he will have it that the one we see and touch in the flesh is the Son, and He who dwells in him the Father, now being wrecked on the doctrine of Noetus, and at other times on that of Theodotus, and never holding anything for certain."

With these texts we must compare Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.*, xxvii: "(The Monarchians) led astray by the distinction between Father and Son, which, while maintaining their unity, we show to be that which exists between the sun and its ray, or the spring and the river, . . . endeavour to interpret it according to their doctrine in such a way that in one single person they distinguish the Father and the Son, saying that the Son is the flesh, that is the man or Jesus, and the Father is the spirit, that is God or the Christ. And thus those who maintain that the Father and the Son are one and the same go on to divide rather than to unite these. For if Jesus is one and Christ is another, then the Son will be one and the Father another, for the Son is Jesus, and the Father is Christ. They learnt this 'monarchy' perhaps from Valentine. . . ."

Ibid., xxix: "You blaspheme, not only because you say that the Father died, but also that He was crucified. . . . The Father therefore did not suffer in and with the Son. Fearing directly to blaspheme the Father, they think they can lessen the blasphemy thus—having agreed that the Father and the Son are two—by saying that the Son suffered, and that the Father suffered with (*compassus est*). But there also they are foolish. For what is to suffer with, if not to suffer with another? If then the Father is impassible, he is also incapable of compassion."

D'Alès (*Hippol.*, pp. 16-18) remarks in connection with these texts that the *Adversus Praxean* can hardly be later than Zephyrinus, and hence Callistus did

Attitude of Zephyrinus and Callistus

After reading all these texts, we should naturally like to determine the doctrinal position taken by the bishops of Rome in the controversy. We cannot do so with complete certainty. But there are some things that can be said. Towards those whom Hippolytus describes as Modalists, the attitude of the bishops varied: they were indulgent to Cleomenes and permitted the faithful to frequent his school; on the other hand they excommunicated Sabellius. We can infer from this that the teaching of these two men was not identical. Hippolytus gives us no exact information concerning Cleomenes; there is nothing to show that he subscribed to the errors of Noetus, and the toleration extended to him makes this hardly likely. Zephyrinus seems to have had little interest for these theological discussions; he intervened only under pressure from Callistus; his interventions, however, were irreproachable.

not need to invent Patricompassionism during his pontificate, for it was anterior to it; "the description of Patricompassionism does not exactly correspond to that in the *Philosophumena*, it shows the divinity as such affected by suffering. Taking the testimony of the *Philosophumena* literally, it would seem that Callistus modified, in a less unacceptable sense, the doctrines already denounced as heretical. The statement of Tertullian, so far as we can understand it, does not concern him. We know, moreover, that Tertullian did not like the Roman clergy, and would not feel obliged to deal tenderly with Callistus in the *De Pudicitia*." Amann, on the other hand, writes (col. 2508): "This doctrine (of Callistus) is strictly the same as that combated by Tertullian at the end of his treatise *Contra Praxean*, and which Franzelin rightly regards as heretical. Whether Callistus taught it is another question, and one would have to be very partial to accept straightway this isolated accusation on the part of a bitter anagonist."

The divergence stressed by D'Alès between the two forms of Patricompassionism may be exact, but the account given by Hippolytus is not sufficiently explicit to establish it with certainty. For the rest, the two doctrines were in agreement: both presented themselves as a modification of the Patripassionism of Noetus; both, while maintaining the unity of person, found the duality of subjects on the Incarnation: He whom one sees and touches is the Son, Jesus; He who dwells in him is the Father, the divinity, and as Tertullian puts it, the Christ. Both wish to avoid blasphemy against the Father, and for this reason they say that He suffered *with* the Son.

In this doctrine, as in that of Noetus, we recognise the vestiges of earlier doctrines: the conception of the God who becomes double and becomes his own Son doubtless comes from the Gnostics, whence also comes the Christological dualism which, in Patricompassionism, distinguishes between Jesus and the Christ. Finally, the ambiguity of theological language served also the Monarchians, the word "spirit" signifying sometimes a person, sometimes the divine nature (cf. *Hist. du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, especially p. 305 and p. 573). But these details are only dialectical subtleties; what gave prestige to their doctrine was the "monarchy" which they claimed to safeguard.

It would be more interesting for us to know the doctrinal position of Callistus, but the difficulties here are greater. The testimony of his antagonist is too impassioned for us to accept it blindly; it is certain, moreover, from this very testimony, that Callistus excommunicated Sabellius. Hippolytus tells us that he was himself regarded as a ditheist, and the reproach was not without foundation, but he nowhere says that he was condemned, as was Sabellius; he seems to have seceded of his own accord. This severity towards Sabellius on the one hand and tolerance towards Hippolytus on the other would be incomprehensible if Callistus had really held the doctrine attributed to him by Hippolytus.³⁴

Theology of Hippolytus

The study of the doctrine of Hippolytus is facilitated by the writings which have come down to us.³⁵ Considered as a whole, this doctrine recalls that of the majority of the apologists, as for instance that of St. Justin, but it aggravates its defects.³⁶ The generation of

³⁴ Duchesne (*Hist. anc. de l' Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 315), after explaining Patripassionism according to Hippolytus and Tertullian, very rightly remarks: "The modification is very slight, and we do not understand how Callistus could have accepted responsibility for it after condemning Sabellius. Controversialists always tend to misrepresent the opinions they combat, and to compromise their opponents with regrettable doctrinal connections. It is, of course, possible that the mistrust aroused by the theology of the Logos, the fear of ditheism, the preponderating preoccupation of the divine unity, combined with the imperfection of technical terminology, may have sometimes led, in the orthodox camp, to unsatisfactory conceptions and above all to expressions open to criticism."

We may also bear in mind what Harnack says, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 740, n. 2: "Hippolytus did not hide the fact that the bishops had on their side the great mass of the Roman community (IX, xi), but he saw everywhere hypocrisy, bitterness, and flattery, whereas to-day we can see that the bishops wished to preserve the unity and peace of their flock from the *rabies theologorum*. In this they simply carried out the duty of their office, and they acted in the spirit of their predecessors, in whose times was required only the recognition of the short and broad confession of faith, freedom being left to those who accepted this. We see again that Hippolytus stands for simple people such as Zephyrinus and the rest, because he does not wish to launch out into the new science, with its 'economic' conception of God."

³⁵ The most important texts are ch. x-xv of the *Adversus Noetum*, and in the *Philosophumena*, ch. xxxii-xxxiv of Book X. Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-31; Amann, art. *Hippolyte*, in *Dict. de Theol. cath.*, col. 2508. These two documents are compared together by D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 23 and n. 2. In the *Philosophumena*, written some twenty years after the *Adversus Noetum*, we have a riper thought, especially in the chapters quoted above; these form the conclusion of the work, and are very carefully written; the theology of Hippolytus here appears in a more finished form, and its errors and omissions are more obvious.

³⁶ Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-31.

the Word is closely attached to the creation of the world, and further, to the Incarnation; it is described as a progressive development, in which three periods can be distinguished. At the commencement, God alone was, but "though He was alone, He was multiple, for He was not without word, wisdom, power, or counsel."³⁷ At the same time, this multiplicity did not as yet imply several distinct persons; the personality of the Logos was constituted only in view of the creation: "As head, counsellor and instrument of creation, God engendered the Logos. This Logos, which He had in him invisibly, was made visible by Him when pronouncing the first word. It is a light which arises from another light. . . . In this way there was another with respect to God."³⁸ This generation, however, is still incomplete; it will be perfected only by the Incarnation: "It was not as non-incarnate, or as in Himself, that the Logos was perfect Son, although He was perfect Logos and Only-begotten; and similarly the flesh could not subsist without the Logos, because it is in the Logos it has its subsistence. Hence it is in this way that the perfect Son of God was manifested."³⁹ This idea of the generation of the Word developing in stages introduced into the very being of God a succession and a progress which the Church could not admit; she also had to repudiate with energy another error of Hippolytus, making the generation of the Word a free act of God like the creation: "If He had willed to make thee God He could have done so: thou hast the example of the Logos; but, willing to make thee man, He made thee man."⁴⁰

These are certainly very grave errors. Yet it would be very unjust to regard Hippolytus as an Arian before Arius: not only does he recognise in Christ the "God who reigns over all things,"⁴¹

³⁷ *Adv. Noet.*, x, cf. *Philos.*, X, xxxii, 1, and xxxiii, 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, x-xi; cf. *Philos.*, X, xxxiii.

³⁹ We find the same doctrine again in the conclusion of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, xi, 5. We know that this conclusion (chs. xi-xii) was written by a different author from the rest of the letter; several historians attribute it to Hippolytus, and think they recognise in it the last page of the *Philosophumena*. Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 27, n. 1.

⁴⁰ *Philos.*, X, xxxiii, 7. This error was a consequence of the cosmological conception of the Trinity; the connection imagined between the generation of the Word and the creation of the world always involved the risk of making this generation a free and contingent act like creation; the apologists of the second century sometimes allowed themselves to lean towards this error (cf. *Hist. du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 461); Tertullian still more (*Adv. Prax.*, iv and x; cf. D'Alès, *Hippolyte*, p. 27); Hippolytus clearly succumbed to it. Cf. *Adv. Noet.*, xvi.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, X, xxxiv, 5.

but he marks very clearly the boundary between creatures who are drawn from nothing, and the Logos "who is divine in essence, and consequently is God."⁴² From this fundamental principle Hippolytus could have deduced the whole Christian doctrine, but he did not do so. The Church accepted the principle and also drew conclusions from it.

Hippolytus' doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit was still more imperfect. In the concluding portion of the *Philosophumena* there is no mention of Him.⁴³ In the book against Noetus, Trinitarian formulae are fairly numerous;⁴⁴ they are interesting in that they manifest a faith already received and supported by a liturgical usage;⁴⁵ but they do not reveal the theology of Hippolytus himself. All the passages in which this is expressed present the Holy Spirit as a force rather than a person; it is above all remarkable that, in spite of the parallelism to which the above-mentioned texts would lead the author, he avoids putting the three persons on the same plane.⁴⁶ All these traits unite in justifying the accusation of ditheism made against Hippolytus by Callistus.⁴⁷

⁴² *Ibid.*, X, xxxiii, 8.

⁴³ Dollinger explained this silence by the esoteric nature of belief in the Holy Spirit; Hagemann (*op. cit.*, p. 269) has well refuted him. In the other books of the *Philosophumena*, we find a few very vague references to the Holy Spirit (D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 30, n. 4).

⁴⁴ Ch. viii: "We must confess God the Father almighty, and Christ Jesus, Son of God, made man, to whom the Father has subjected all things save himself and the Holy Spirit, and (confess that) these are really three (*τρία*)." xii: "We see the incarnate Logos, through him we conceive the Father, we believe the Son, we adore the Holy Spirit." xiv: "The Father commands, the Son obeys, and the Holy Spirit instructs; the Father is above all; the Son is by all, the Holy Spirit is in all. And we cannot conceive one only God if we do not truly believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. . . . The Father willed, the Son made, the Spirit manifested. It is by this trinity (*τριάδος*) that the Father is glorified." xviii, conclusion of the book: "It is He who is the God made man for us, to whom the Father has subjected all things. To him be glory and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the holy Church, now and always and for ever and ever Amen."

⁴⁵ On these Trinitarian doxologies in Hippolytus, cf. *supra*, p. 697, n. 17.

⁴⁶ *Adv. Noet*, xiv: "I will not say two Gods, but one only, but two Persons, and in the 'economy' a third rank, the grace of the Holy Spirit. For the Father is one, and there are two Persons, because there is also the Son, and in the third place the Holy Spirit." *Ibid.*: "The Jews glorified the Father, but did not give him thanks, because they did not know the Son; the disciples knew the Son but not in the Holy Spirit, and that is why they denied him."

⁴⁷ On the Christology of Hippolytus, cf. the long note by Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 606-608.

Martyrdom of Hippolytus and of Pontianus

This brief outline of the theology of Hippolytus has revealed the many influences which left their mark upon it. We find there the Subordinationism of the apologists, more definite and more dangerous than it was in them; we find there, on the other hand, some features of the Christology of Irenæus,⁴⁸ and his exegetical method in its boldness already anticipates Origen.⁴⁹ We may add that this controversialist, so mistrustful in regard to Greek philosophy, yet borrowed much from Hellenism. His mind was agile rather than steady, he was an impassioned controversialist and a brilliant writer, yet without depth, and by his qualities and failings he represents the proud science which then set itself against the common faith; faced with the bishops of Rome, Zephyrinus and Callistus, who retained around them the great mass of their faithful, he drew apart and seceded, taking his little church with him. The persecution of Maximin led to his deportation to Sardinia together with the pope Pontianus in 235; this brought him back to his duty and to contact with his legitimate head. Pontianus resigned his charge; Hippolytus doubtless did the same; both died as martyrs, and their bodies, taken back to Rome, were similarly honoured by the Church.⁵⁰

Life and Works of Hippolytus

Hippolytus, who has been the subject of the preceding pages, was for many centuries a personage surrounded with a certain mystery. Eusebius⁵¹ and St. Jerome⁵² knew of him and also of several of his works; they knew that he was a bishop, but neither could say of what church. Pope Damasus regarded him as an adherent of the Novatian schism. The poet Prudentius repeated this, and added to it the torture of the son of Theseus: Hippolytus was torn to pieces by wild horses.⁵³

⁴⁸ E.g. in the *De Christo et Antichristo*, iii and lxi; cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 38; Harnack, *loc. cit.*, quoting Overbeck, *Quaest. Hippol. Specimen*, 1864.

⁴⁹ Hippolytus was in fact in personal touch with Origen; St. Jerome says that it was in Origen's presence that Hippolytus pronounced the homily *De laude Domini Salvatoris*. Cf. Bk. IV, ch. xxiv, § 1.

⁵⁰ Cf. D'Alès, *Hippolyte*, p. 7.

⁵¹ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xx.

⁵² *De viris illustribus*, lxi.

⁵³ All these doubtful and contradictory elements are set forth by D'Alès, *Théologie de saint Hippolyte*, Introduction, pp. i-xlvi.

In 1551 there was exhumed, on the site of the ancient cemetery on the Tiburtine way, a mutilated statue which was recognised as that of Hippolytus; "on the sides of the chair is carved, in Greek characters, a Paschal cycle which starts from the first year of Alexander Severus (222) and covers a period of a hundred and twelve years; on one of the steps is a list of works. . . . This list of works, inscribed in marble in the third century, presents an exceptional interest for the history of Christian origins."⁵⁴ This statue, erected during the lifetime of Hippolytus by his admirers, tells us of the works composed by him previous to its erection, that is, apparently, prior to 224.⁵⁵

The Philosophumena

In 1842, Mynoides Mynas brought to Paris from Mount Athos the manuscript of the *Philosophumena*. Miller edited it in 1851 under the name of Origen, which was on the MS.; in 1859 Duncker and Schneidewin brought out a new edition, under the name of Hippolytus. This attribution, after a little hesitation, has been accepted by all historians. Much light has thus been thrown on his life, hitherto so obscure.

Hippolytus was a priest at Rome under Zephyrinus; he broke with the Church at the coming of Callistus (217). Under Maximin, in 235, he was condemned, at the same time as the bishop Pontianus, to deportation to Sardinia, where he died. His martyrdom wiped out at Rome the stain of his schism; yet its memory persisted sufficiently to cause him to be regarded later on as a partisan of the Novatian schism. His ecclesiastical position, and the fact that his works were written in Greek, separated him from the Roman tradition; hence the uncertainty concerning his see and his life.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. iii; cf. pp. xlii et seq.

⁵⁵ This Paschal cycle, attributed to Hippolytus, was some five hours in advance annually on lunar time; already in the year 236 there was a difference of two days between the true full moon and that indicated in the rule of Hippolytus. It is hardly likely that it would have been engraved on the marble when its inexactitude was already recognised, and still less likely that the statue was erected after 235, when Hippolytus's confession had obliterated his schism and reconciled his followers with the Church. In 222 on the other hand, the year of the death of St. Callistus, the error in the reckoning was not yet apparent (it would have been noticeable only in 224), and the schism set in violent opposition this little group of believers and their bishop on the one hand and the great Church on the other.

⁵⁶ These few points are now beyond question; the date of his birth is less certain; Tixeront puts it about 170-175, a likely conjecture. But if we admit that

The Apostolic Tradition

We have already mentioned among the works of Hippolytus the *Apostolic Tradition*. It calls for further treatment. Of all his works this has been the most difficult to identify, yet it surpasses the others in interest.

It was long known under the title of the *Egyptian Church Order*,⁵⁷ and had to be separated out from a whole series of collections of canons dealing with discipline and liturgy, and belonging for the most part to the fourth century.⁵⁸

The merit of this identification belongs chiefly to Dom Con-

Hippolytus knew Irenæus in Rome (before 177), the date must be put earlier.

The most important works are: *De Christo et Antichristo*, about 200; *In Daniele*, between 200 and 204; *Adversus Noetum*, between 200 and 210; *Traditio apostolica*, about 217; *Philosophumena*, after 222; *Adversus haeresim Artemonis*, about 230; *Chronica*, after 234. Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. xlvii-xlviii.

⁵⁷ This work no longer exists in its original text. We possess several versions: the earliest and most faithful is a Latin translation discovered in a palimpsest at Verona; unfortunately, this palimpsest is mutilated and lacks several sheets; it has been edited by Hauler, *Didascalie Apostolorum fragmenta Veronensia latina*, Leipzig, 1900. Three Eastern versions—Coptic, Ethiopic and Arabic—give us another recension of this work. An English edition of these three versions has been published by Horner, *Statutes of the Apostles*, London, 1904. Complete edition, English and Latin, by Dom H. Connolly, *The So-called Egyptian Church Order and Derived Documents, in Texts and Studies*, VIII, 4, 1916, pp. 175-194. Latin translation from the Coptic version in Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, II (Paderborn, 1905), pp. 97-119. Duchesne gives the *Apostolic Tradition* in great part in the fifth edition of his *Origines du Culte chrétien*, 1920, pp. 545-556.

[A new English version, with excellent Historical Introduction by Gregory Dix, was published by the S.P.C.K. in 1937, under the title *The Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome*.—Tr.]

⁵⁸ These are: the *Canons of Hippolytus*, translated from Greek into Coptic, and from Coptic into Arabic. Latin translation by Dom Haneberg, Munich, 1870; reproduced and commented by Achelis, *Die Aeltesten Quellen des orientalischen Kirchenrechtes*, Leipzig, 1891; German translation by Riedel, *Die Kirchenrechtsquellen des Patriarchats Alexandrien*, 1900, pp. 193-230.

Next, the *Apostolic Constitutions*. This collection is mentioned for the first time in pseudo-Ignatius, *Ad Trall.*, vii, 3; it was drawn up by the writer who interpolated the letters of Ignatius at the end of the fourth century. The first six books are a modification of the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (cf. *supra* p. 713); the seventh is in great part a reproduction of the *Didache*; the eighth, which alone concerns us here, depends on the *Apostolic Tradition*. Ed. Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, Vol. I, 1905.

Thirdly, the *Epitome*, an abridged redaction of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, but reproducing the original text of Hippolytus for the ordination of bishops and lectors. Ed. Funk, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 77-84.

Fourthly, the *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. Syriac text, ed. Rahmani, Mayence, 1899.

nolly.⁵⁹ He showed that what was called the *Egyptian Church Order* is in reality the *Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus, from which are derived, independently of each other, the *Canons of St. Hippolytus*, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, followed by the *Epitome*, and the *Testament*.

This thesis, received at first with some hesitation,⁶⁰ gradually met with more and more acceptance, and has finally become the general view.⁶¹ It is, in fact, established by decisive arguments,⁶² but must always be understood with certain reservations. Canonical collections are, more than any other works, exposed to modifications; they do not bear the personal mark of one writer, and they present a legislation and a formulary which may have been modified in the course of time. The work which we are examining must be studied the more carefully because the original text is lacking and is represented by two groups of versions, one of which is incomplete and the other not very faithful.⁶³

In our own quotations from this work of Hippolytus, we shall take care always to use the Latin version of Verona or the text of the *Epitome* for portions in which it reproduces the original text. Having said this we can now study this early liturgy in its chief features.

⁵⁹ He established this identification in 1916 in the book mentioned above (p. 744, n. 57). He had been preceded in this path by E. von der Goltz in 1906, and by E. Schwartz in 1910. The three workers did not know of each other's labours till afterwards. Connolly's work is the most complete, and it is the one which had a decisive effect.

⁶⁰ Tixeront, *Patrologie*, p. 283, is cautious, so also Watkins, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 131.

⁶¹ D'Alès, *Recherches de Sc. relig.*, Vol. VIII, 1918, pp. 132-148; Wilmart, in *Revue du Clergé français*, Vol. XCVI, pp. 95-116; Amann, art. *Hippolyte*, in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, col. 2503; Cabrol, art. *Hippolyte*, in *Dict. d'Archéol. et de Liturgie*, col. 2411; Duchesne, in 5th edn. of *Origines du culte chrétien* (*supra*, p. 744, n. 57).

⁶² The Paschal fast still consists only of one or two days, as in the ancient custom. The *Canons* and the *Apostolic Constitutions* recognise a fast of forty days. The Eucharist is still received and reserved at home. To the neophytes at their first communion is given a drink of water and honey. To these features, which bear witness to the early date of the document, we must add those which speak of Roman usages or expressions familiar to Hippolytus. They will be found in Dom Connolly's work, especially pp. 55-135.

⁶³ Thus, in a Latin translation made by Funk from the Coptic, we find this Creed which the deacon gives to the neophyte he is going to baptise: "Credo in Deum unum verum, Patrem omnipotentem, et in Filium ejus unigenitum Jesum Christum, Dominum et Salvatorem nostrum, et in Spiritum ejus Sanctum, omnia vivificantem, trinitatem consubstantialem, deitatem, unam, . . ." (ed. Funk, p. 110). We cannot expect to find in Hippolytus: "trinitas consubstantialis."

The Liturgy of Hippolytus

The *Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus is the earliest liturgical collection we possess. As we have remarked elsewhere,⁶⁴ the prayers of St. Clement, the *Didache* and St. Polycarp do not give us liturgical formulæ imposed authoritatively by the Church, but prayers of free inspiration, though composed on traditional themes. The descriptions in St. Justin of the Sunday Mass and the baptismal Mass⁶⁵ explicitly testify to the place still open for the improvisation of the celebrant. In Hippolytus things are no longer the same; we have a liturgical usage already codified.⁶⁶ It is true that the book containing it was drawn up by Hippolytus when a schismatic, and was intended by him for his little church. At the same time, as we have seen, Hippolytus was in no wise an innovator; he set himself up as a champion of tradition, and we can allow that as a whole the liturgical usage he codified was the traditional one; in certain details he modified or stressed the formulæ in accordance with his personal preferences, but he respected its main features.⁶⁷

The first liturgical function which Hippolytus describes is the consecration of a bishop. The bishop is chosen by all the people. When he has been named and unanimously accepted, the people are called together on a Sunday, together with the *presbyterium* and all the bishops present. All consenting (the bishops) lay hands on him, the *presbyterium* standing by in silence. All pray silently, asking for the descent of the Spirit. One of the bishops present, at the request of all, imposes hands on the bishop he is to consecrate, saying this prayer:

O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all consolation, who dwellest on high in the heavens and yet regardest those here below, who knowest all things before they come to be . . . Thou, Father, who knowest the heart, grant to thy servant, whom thou hast chosen for the episcopate, to feed thy holy flock, to present before thy eyes the primacy of the priesthood, serving Thee without reproach day and night, and that he may unceasingly implore the clemency of thy countenance, and distribute according to thy

⁶⁴ Cf. *supra*, p. 696.

⁶⁵ Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 463-465.

⁶⁶ Even so, in one passage we still find room left for personal initiative. This text has been mentioned above, p. 697 and n. 18.

⁶⁷ A detailed study of this by Dom Cabrol will be found in the *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie*, Vol. VI, col. 2409-2419.

commands, and loose all that is bound according to the power Thou hast given to the apostles;⁶⁸ may he please Thee by meekness and purity of heart, offering Thee an odour of sweetness by thy child Jesus Christ, through whom be glory, power and honour to Thee, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever.⁶⁹

Immediately after his consecration, the new bishop is given the kiss of peace by all, then he celebrates the Eucharistic sacrifice. Describing this Pontifical Mass, Hippolytus gives us its anaphora. This venerable text deserves to be quoted:

We render thee thanks, O God, through thy beloved child⁷⁰ Jesus Christ, whom in these last times thou has sent us as Saviour, Redeemer, and messenger of thy will; Who is thine inseparable Word, through whom Thou madest all things, and in whom Thou wert well pleased. Thou didst send Him from heaven into the womb of the Virgin, where He was incarnate and manifested as thy Son, born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin; fulfilling thy will and acquiring for thee a holy people, He extended his hands in his passion, in order to deliver from suffering those who have believed in Thee. And when He was betrayed voluntarily to his passion, in order to destroy death, break the chains of the devil, tread hell under his feet, enlighten the just, fix a term, and manifest the resurrection, taking bread and giving thanks to thee, He said: "Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you." And likewise the chalice, saying, "This is my blood, which is shed for you: when you do this, you make a memory of me." We therefore, remembering his death and resurrection, offer to Thee the bread and the chalice, giving Thee thanks that thou hast deigned to allow us to appear before Thee and to serve Thee. And we beg Thee to send thy

⁶⁸ We call attention to this mention of the power of the keys; it shows that, though Hippolytus was opposed to the reforms of Callistus, he did not question the power which bishops have of forgiving sins.

⁶⁹ This doxology seems to be overlaid: Christ occurs in it twice, as the Mediator ("through whom . . .") and as the object of the doxology with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This complication would seem not to be primitive, but to be due probably to the translators into Ethiopic or Latin. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 623-625.

⁷⁰ Here, as in the preceding text, we give "child" as the equivalent of the Latin word "puer," which corresponds to the Greek *παις*. This last term, which signifies "servant" as well as "child," comes from the Septuagint, which applies it to the Messias, the "servant of Jahveh." From thence it passed into certain texts of the New Testament, and then into some of the early Fathers, the *Didache*, Barnabas, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria; cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, p. 346; Vol. II, pp. 180, 395, 496, 502. When Christian writers apply the term to Christ, it is usually in the sense of "child." That is the sense the word has here.

Holy Spirit upon the oblation of the holy Church and, gathering all together in one, grant to all the saints who partake, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to be strengthened in the faith in truth, so that we may praise and glorify Thee by thy child Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and honour to Thee, Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit, in thy holy Church, now and for ever and ever.

In this fine prayer we may detect here and there the personal stamp of Hippolytus.⁷¹ But as a whole it is profoundly traditional, and is in the first place the thanksgiving or Eucharist properly so called. The supreme blessing for which the Church gives thanks to God is the Incarnation of the Word, and the Redemption which is its fruit. The mention of the glorious Passion of the Lord introduces the narrative of the Last Supper, in which occur the words of consecration, and then a very brief *anamnesis* recalls the death and resurrection of the Lord. Lastly, we have the offering of the consecrated gifts, and the *epiclesis* or invocation of the Holy Spirit: the Church asks that the Holy Spirit, coming down on the oblation, may consecrate the unity of Christians and strengthen their faith.⁷²

This Eucharistic liturgy, so strongly rooted in the past, had a great influence on later liturgical tradition, especially in the West.⁷³

After consecration of the bishop and the Eucharistic anaphora, we must mention the baptismal liturgy of Hippolytus. This text has all the more interest because in the baptismal formula we find the baptismal creed: ⁷⁴

(The catechumen is to go down into the water, and the priest is to lay his hand on his head, and ask him: "Dost thou believe in God,

⁷¹ For instance, the addition of the words "in the holy Church" to the doxology, cf. *supra*, p. 697. The idea that in the Incarnation the Word appeared as Son is peculiar to Hippolytus: cf. *Adv. Noet.*, iv, and *supra* p. 740. Christ "extending his hands in his passion" is a phrase dear to Hippolytus, so also the expression "ut resurrectionem manifestet." Cf. *Philosophumena*, X, xxxiii, 17.

⁷² On this *epiclesis*, cf. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl*, pp. 80-81. See also the interesting discussion between J. W. Turner and Dom Connolly concerning the meaning of this *epiclesis*, in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. XXV, pp. 139-150 and 337-364, also the article by Dom Casel in *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft*, Vol. IV, pp. 169-178.

⁷³ "We can say that all liturgies can be reduced to two primitive forms: the Roman liturgy of Hippolytus, and the Egyptian liturgy. This is the most important result of the preceding study" (Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl*, p. 174). The starting point for the study of these two liturgies is, on the one hand, the text of Hippolytus, and on the other the anaphora of Serapion. The latter belongs to the fourth century, and does not come within the scope of this book.

⁷⁴ Here, as always, the testimony of Hippolytus is found in two main forms, the Eastern, found in the Ethiopic, Arabic and Coptic versions; the other Western,

the Father Almighty?" And the one to be baptised is to reply: "I believe in Him.")

Holding his hand on his head, the priest baptises him the first time. Afterwards he says:

"Dost thou believe in Christ Jesus, Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Spirit, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried, rose again the third day, living from among the dead, ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead?"

And when he replies: "I believe in this," he shall be baptised a second time.

Then the priest says: "Dost thou believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church, and the resurrection of the flesh?"

The one to be baptised shall say: "I believe in this," and shall be baptised a third time.

Then, when he comes out of the water, the priest shall anoint him with consecrated oil, saying: "I anoint thee with holy oil, in the name of Jesus Christ." Then all shall dry themselves, dress, and enter the church. The bishop shall then lay hands on them, saying this prayer:

"O Lord God, who has deigned to forgive these their sins through the laver of regeneration of the Holy Spirit, shed upon them thy grace, that they may serve Thee according to thy will, for thine is the glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the holy Church, now and for ever, Amen."

Then, spreading some of the consecrated oil on their heads with his hand, he shall say: "I anoint thee with holy oil in the name of the Lord God Almighty, and of Christ Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit." And signing their foreheads, he shall give them a kiss, saying: "The Lord be with thee." And the one who has been signed shall reply: "And with thy spirit." And so he shall do for each of them.

Thereafter, they shall pray with all the people; they do not pray with the faithful until they have received everything. After the prayer, they exchange the kiss of peace.⁷⁵

found in the Latin version. The last mentioned is the earliest and most authoritative witness to the work of Hippolytus, and it is the one we follow. It has a lacuna at the beginning, caused by the loss of some sheets of the Verona palimpsest; a conjectural restoration of the text from the other versions is included above, between brackets.

⁷⁵ This text will be found in Dom Connolly, *op. cit.*, p. 185. On the baptismal creed, cf. Connolly, *On the text of the baptismal Creed of Hippolytus*, in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. XXV, 1924, pp. 131-139; D. B. Capelle, *Le symbole romain au IIe siècle*, in *Revue bénédictine*, Vol. XXXIX, 1927, pp. 33-44; *Les origines du symbol romain*, in *Recherches de Théol. ancienne*, Vol. II, 1930, pp. 5-20; and *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 162-166.

This liturgical formula gives us a description of the baptismal rite in all its details: baptism is administered usually by immersion; ⁷⁶ this immersion is repeated three times, ⁷⁷ accompanied each time by an interrogation and a reply: the neophyte professes his faith in each of the persons of the holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. ⁷⁸

The baptismal rite concludes with an anointing with consecrated oil. The minister of the sacrament is the priest.

Then begins the office of the bishop: he lays hands on the newly baptised, anoints their heads, and signs their foreheads. Here we have the sacrament of confirmation, conferred after baptism. ⁷⁹

⁷⁶ In Bk. II (p. 342) we quoted the text of the *Didache*, VII, which prescribes baptism by immersion as a general rule, but allows baptism by infusion if water is lacking. In the third century, baptism by infusion was administered to the sick. Cyprian defended its validity (*Epist.* LXIX, 12-16), but Pope Cornelius, discussing the case of Novatian, considered that those so baptised ought not to be admitted into the ranks of the clergy (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 17). Same decision in canon 12 of the Council of Neocaesarea (314-315), in Mansi, II, 542; Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, Vol. I, p. 333. Cf. d'Alès, *De Baptismo*, p. 39.

⁷⁷ In the text of the *Didache* mentioned above (n. 76), a triple infusion is similarly prescribed in baptism by infusion. The rite of triple immersion is frequently mentioned in documents of the third and fourth centuries. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 138-144.

⁷⁸ In the text of Hippolytus we have no baptismal formula other than these interrogations and replies. Dom de Puniet, after quoting other similar texts, infers (*Dict. d'Archéol.*, art. *Baptême*, col. 342): "It is difficult for us to avoid the impression that in certain places, at any rate, the interrogations *de fide* containing the express mention of the three divine persons took the place of the baptismal formula. Confining ourselves to the early documents, that is the hypothesis which best explains the double peculiarity pointed out above." P. D'Alès (*De Baptismo*, p. 59) observes that this opinion was held by the well-known liturgical scholars Dom du Frische (1693) and Dom Le Nourry (1724). He adds. "Illa sententia, nuper instaurata a P. de Puniet, nostro judicio videtur posse defendi."

⁷⁹ Cf. D'Alès, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. VII, 1918, p. 137, n. 3. Amongst other Roman features of this liturgy, he stresses "the presence in the baptismal ritual of two distinct functions: the first is given by the priest to the neophyte coming up from the baptismal piscina, the other is reserved for the bishop, and takes place after the imposition of hands. The first is a secondary rite of baptism, in the other we recognise the sacrament of confirmation. This distinction, which would be looked for in vain in documents of Latin Africa, appears in a Roman document of the year 416, the famous decretal of Pope Innocent I to Decentius, Bishop of Iguvium. The text of Hippolytus gives us the first testimony to this, two centuries earlier."

A new study of this question will be found in the article by P. Van den Eynde, *Baptême et confirmation d'après les Constitutions apostoliques*, VII, 44, 3, *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXVII, 1937, pp. 196-212, especially pp. 205-208. Cf. P. Galtier, *Imposition des mains et bénédictions au baptême*, *ibid.*, pp. 464-466.

THE CHURCH AND THE ROMAN STATE FROM SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS TO DECIUS (193-249)¹

§ I. THE PERSECUTION UNDER SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

New Features in the Relations Between the Church and the Roman State after the Accession of Septimius Severus (193)

A NEW period began in the relations between the Church and the Roman state with the reign of Septimius Severus, whose accession (193) practically coincided with the important pontificate of Pope Victor (189-199), successor to Eleutherius. It did not see the abolition of the legislative régime to which Christians had been

¹ Bibliography.—Same general bibliography as for Chs. VIII and IX. The *Ausgewählte Martyrakten* of Knoff appeared in a 3rd edn. in 1929, revised by G. Krüger.

On the persecution under Septimius Severus, consult A. de Ceuleneer, *Essai sur la vie et le règne de Septime Sévère*, in *Mémoires de l'Académie royale de Belgique*, Vol. XLIII, Brussels, 1880; C. Fuchs, *Geschichte des Kaisers L. Septimius Severus*, Vienna, 1884; M. Platnauer, *Life and Reign of the Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus*, Oxford, 1918; J. Hesebrock, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Septimius Severus*, Heidelberg, 1921; Fluss, *Severus*, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, 2nd series, Vol. II, 1922.

On Alexander Severus, see article *Aurelius*, no. 221, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, Vol. II, 1896; W. Thiele, *De Severo Alexandro imperatore*, Berlin, 1909; A. Jarde, *Etudes critiques sur la vie et le règne d'Alexandre Sévère*, Paris, 1925.

On the intellectual world in the time of the Severi, and its relations with Christianity: J. Reville, *La religion à Rome sous les Sévère*, Paris, 1886; K. Bihlmeyer, *Die syrischen Kaiser zu Rom (211-235) und das Christentum*, Rottenburg, 1916.

On the persecution under Maximin, see Hohl, article *Julius*, no. 526, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, Vol. X, 1917.

On the reign of Philip the Arab, see Stein, art. *Julius*, nos. 386 and 387 (*ibid.*).

On the general attitude of the Roman state with regard to Christianity, we may add the following to the works already mentioned in Bk. I: G. Costa, *Religione politica nell' Impero romano*, Rome, 1923; E. Ciccotti, *Il problema religioso nel mondo antico*, Milan, 1933; A. Pincherle, *Cristianesimo e Impero romano*, in *Rivista storica italiana*, series IV, Vol. IV, 1933, pp. 454 et seq.

subjected for more than a hundred years. Though the imperial authority had in the reign of Commodus indulged for the first time in a veritable act of tolerance, the principles themselves had not been modified, nor the old law abrogated. From one day to another the wheels of justice could always be set in motion against the faithful Christians as a result of private denunciations.

But with Septimius Severus a new step was taken, which many of his successors would follow: the public authority itself took the initiative in instituting proceedings, in varying circumstances. Trajan's rule, *conquirendi non sunt*, was abandoned; the era of persecution by edict began. But by comparison, proceedings arising from private accusation became rarer, and bade fair to cease altogether, so that the direct activities of authority in regard to Christians may have lessened those of private individuals by making them pointless or by removing occasions for their exercise, though on the contrary the action of public authority may possibly have led to a faint revival of private zeal which had been tending to die out.

Thus, from the end of the second century to the beginning of the fourth, the Church felt the shock of sudden and violent outbursts, often growing in violence, but finally ending in failure, each new defeat making still more apparent the impotency of the pagan Empire in regard to a movement which resembled the irresistible surge of the sea. Hence we find a series of sometimes lengthy periods of peace, disturbed from time to time by applications of the ancient régime, but always tending to greater stability.

Toleration During the First Part of the Reign

At the beginning of this period, the ancient régime continued side by side with the first manifestations of the new policy. Hence we find in the reign of the emperor Septimius Severus Christians still subject, according to times and places, to the contrasted vicissitudes we have noted in the preceding period. The Emperor did not seem to be badly disposed towards them; Christians had access to the palace, though prepared to be molested there occasionally. One day the young Antoninus Caracalla, the heir to the throne, who had had a Christian nurse,² complained that one of his playmates

² "Lacte christiano educatus," says Tertullian (*Apologeticus*, xvi).

had been whipped because he may have been a Christian.³ The Syrian princesses of the imperial family, who were interested in religious matters, may have been curious about Christianity: but this can be stated definitely only of a niece of the emperor, Julia Mamaea, at the time when her son Alexander was in his turn placed on the throne.⁴ Septimius Severus himself, according to Tertullian, one day led a manifestation of popular hostility against the Christians.⁵ Also we find a severe application of the ancient legislation in various circumstances. Three works of Tertullian, written between 197 and 202, the *Exhortatio ad martyres*, the *Ad nationes*, and the *Apologeticus*, display great indignation at the spectacle of so many Christians of both sexes condemned for their faith in Africa, by governors who seem more than once to have been urged on by the popular hatred.

The Edict Forbidding Conversion to Christianity

Between 200 and 202 we get a new fact: when leaving the East, where he had been occupied since 197 in the war against the Parthians, the Emperor resolved to put a stop both to Jewish and to Christian conversions. Did this result from the impressions produced in him by his stay of several years in the Levant (where nevertheless he had found a wife), and his growing feeling that these conversions were beginning to constitute a grave danger for the Empire? The biography of Septimius Severus gives the fact itself in concise but expressive terms, without, however, informing us of its reasons: "He forbid, under heavy penalties, people to become Jews, and enacted the same with regard to Christians."⁶ In point of fact, this was no innovation in the case of Judaism, for the circumcision of anyone not a member of a Jewish family had long been prohibited; the novelty lay in the prohibition of Christian baptism.⁷ Did it apply to all baptisms, even of the children of

³ Spartianus, *Caracalla*, i, 6, says "ob judaicam religionem," which might at that epoch signify a Christian just as much as a Jew.

⁴ Cf. below, p. 758.

⁵ *Ad Scapulam*, iv. Cf. Aubé, *Histoire des persecutions de l'Eglise*, III: *Les chrétiens dans l'Empire romain de la fin des Antonins au milieu du IIIe siècle* (180-249), 2nd edn., pp. 92 et seq.

⁶ *Historia Augusta: Severus*, xvii: "Judaeos fieri sub gravi poena vetuit; idem etiam de christianis sanxit."

⁷ The exact date is not easy to determine. The *Vita Severi*, loc. cit., puts the edict of Severus during the emperor's stay in Palestine in 202, after taking over

Christians? The connection with the measure concerning Jews seems rather to indicate that only fresh conversions were affected.

Application of the Edict

Nevertheless, whether applied rigorously or only as intimidating Christians, the edict was calculated to arrest Christian propaganda. It did not have this effect, however, or else its application did not last for long, for the movement of conversions does not seem to have suffered any serious interruption. In any case, the Christian writers who narrate the facts of the persecution in this period do not divide them into events which followed the edict, and others which resulted from previous legislation.

It was, however, very probably the carrying-out of the new interdict which led to the disorganisation of that well-known centre of Christian teaching, the catechetical school of Alexandria.⁸ Clement, its head, was obliged to leave. His disciple, Origen, whose father Leonides had just been martyred, courageously tried to reconstitute it, but met with great difficulties, and though he himself escaped death, several new converts instructed by him were executed. There were many other martyrs. The virgin Potamioena, who was burnt with her mother in a cauldron of burning tar, and Basilides, an apparitor of the prefect, decapitated at Alexandria, are among the best known.⁹

The persecution spread to the province of Africa, where it made illustrious victims such as Perpetua and Felicitas. These were two young women of Thurburbo Minus, one a matron, and the other one of her slaves, who perished at Carthage with four other Christians, two being young men, Saturninus and Secundulus, and the others being Revocatus the slave, and their catechist Saturus. That was on March 7th, 203, under the provisional government of the procurator Hilarianus, who took the place of the proconsul. Perpetua herself wrote the account of her last days, and when the

the consulate at Antioch. But as Severus thereupon made a voyage to Egypt before returning to Rome in the beginning of June 202, it would seem that it preceded his stay in Palestine, which would then be in 201, or even the end of 200. Cf. G. Goyau, *Chronologie de l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1891, p. 249,

n. 10.

⁸ Cf. Bk. IV.

⁹ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, v.

hour of her death had arrived, a witness, who seems to have been none other than Tertullian, completed the moving story, added a prologue and inserted the several parts into the framework of a moral and religious exhortation.¹⁰ It is hardly surprising that in these circumstances the *Passion* of Perpetua has a certain savour of Montanism; but on the other hand there is absolutely no real indication, notwithstanding what some have said of the visions Perpetua had in her prison, that she or her companions shared the particular beliefs of the narrator of their sufferings. They certainly appear as "spiritual" Christians with a very deep interior life, but they retain even in the exaltation of martyrdom a sense of moderation, a human touch, and an air of Roman dignity which are very striking. The modest demeanour of Perpetua, who pulled together her clothing, torn by the angry cow to which she had been exposed, and who fixed once more on her head the clasp holding her hair in position, is well known, as is also the maternal grace with which, perceiving that Felicitas was lying on the ground badly injured, she stretched out her hand and raised her up from the ground. The populace was affected by this at the time, and cried out that these two women should go out from the arena alive. But a moment later they recalled them, and demanded that they should be put to death.

At that time popular passions were unleashed against the Christians. Riots led to the violation of even their cemeteries, and attempts were made to close these: "Arcae non sint: no more cemeteries for the Christians" was the cry.¹¹

There was an uneasy lull during the proconsulates of Julius Asper and Pudens. Then the persecution broke out in a more terrible form, under Scapula (211-213), affecting not only the proconsular province, but also Numidia and Mauretania. Tertullian endeavoured to arrest it by his letter to Scapula, which was "a combination of reasoning, petition, and threats."¹² For, he said, if the persecution were to continue, "what will you do with the

¹⁰ Text in Migne, *P.L.*, Vol. III, 13-58; Armitage Robinson, *Texts and Studies*, I, 2, Cambridge, 1891; Franchi de Cavalieri, *Römische Quartalschrift*, Supplement Heft 5, Rome, 1896; Knoff, *Ausgewählte Martyrerakten*, 2nd edn., p. 42; J. van Beck, *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, Nymegen, 1936.

¹¹ Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*, iii.

¹² P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Paris, 1901, Vol. I, p. 47.

thousands of men and women who will offer their limbs to your chains?" In point of fact, after a still more cruel outburst, the persecution died down before the end of the proconsulate of Scapula which coincided with a change of government.

The persecution had by that time reached other provinces besides northern Africa and Egypt. A Roman Christian named Natalis confessed the faith, without however suffering death.¹³ There were martyrs in Cappadocia under the legate Claudius Herminianus, who showed himself particularly rigorous, though according to Tertullian at the end he was almost converted when suffering from a painful malady.¹⁴ A bishop Alexander remained a long time in prison,¹⁵ and it is possible that some Christians in Phrygia perished likewise at that time.¹⁶

On the other hand, the martyrdom of St. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons after St. Pothinus, which is placed in the reign of Septimius Severus, is not at all certain. The mention of the name of Irenæus in the *Hieronymian Martyrology* is not sufficient to prove its reality: it includes the names of other bishops of Lyons who certainly did not die as martyrs. St. Jerome, it is true, calls Irenæus a martyr incidentally in his *Commentary on Isaias*, but he says nothing about him in the *De viris illustribus*, in which he gives a brief life of the saint. Lastly, the silence both of Tertullian, who nevertheless speaks of Irenæus in his works, and of Eusebius, is not favourable to the tradition of the martyrdom of the second bishop of Lyons.

The date and circumstances of the martyrdom of St. Andeolus, who died for the faith near Viviers, in presence of Septimius Severus himself, would appear to be more certain if they were guaranteed by a document more authoritative than the martyrologies of Adon and Usuard.

It is equally possible that various martyrs honoured in towns in the Lyons region, Chalon, Tournus, and Autun, such as SS. Alexander, Epipodius, Marcellus, Valentinus and Symphorian, may have been victims of the Severian persecution, but nothing definite can be said about them.

¹³ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 8. The incident probably belongs to this persecution, but the date is not given by Eusebius.

¹⁴ Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*, iii.

¹⁵ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xii, 5.

¹⁶ Martyrdoms of Gaius and Alexander (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 22); the date is not certain.

§ 2. THE SUCCESSORS OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

Caracalla

The reign of Antoninus Caracalla, which began shortly afterwards, marked a return to the policy of appeasement. Of examples of severity towards Christians there are hardly any to mention other than the doubtful martyrdom of a bishop Alexander in Tuscany;¹ some acts of hostility in Osroene, which had then become a Roman province and whose Christian inhabitants, including the famous Bardesanes,² may have been disturbed both as Christians and as partisans of the dispossessed king;³ and lastly the continuation of the troubles in the province of Africa under the cruel proconsul Scapula. The legate of Numidia and the procurator of Mauretania contented themselves with employing the sword when Christians were denounced to them. Scapula, open to all denunciations, multiplied the victims and sent them to the wild beasts.⁴ But whether or not Tertullian's letter made an impression on him, he in turn became less fierce in the course of time. Doubtless also the denunciations became rarer, and the province was able to breathe again. It was destined to enjoy thirty-seven years of peace until the end of 249, interrupted only by a brief outbreak under Maximin.

Elagabalus

The short reign of Elagabalus, who was completely indifferent to the old Roman tradition, did not bring any fresh menace to the Church. He was imperial champion of solar monotheism in the form of the worship of his own god, the Baal of Emesa, and could not be zealous for the defence of the old religion of Rome. Aelius Lampridius, his biographer in the *Augustan History*, even asserts

¹ The *Passio Sancti Alexandri* (*Acta Sanctorum, Septembris*, Vol. VI, pp. 230-235) says that this bishop was taken to Caracalla, who was then decorating the imperial villa at Baccano, twenty miles from Rome on the Via Claudia. No episcopal see is known as existing then in that region, but this bishop may have been a member of the Roman "council," governing under the authority of the Bishop of Rome some portion of the territory belonging to the Roman see. On the other hand, the discovery of the remains of an imperial villa at Baccano has led to the identification of Caracalla with the Antoninus named in these Acts of St. Alexander, and has thus increased the credibility of the narrative.

² On Bardesanes, cf. *supra*, p. 640, n. 74.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xxx. Cf. *infra*, p. 768.

⁴ Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*.

that he entertained a desire to build on the Palatine hill a Helio-gabalum which would combine the symbols of all the religions, including those of the *christiana devotio*.⁵ But an implicit part of his programme was that some day Christianity would have to allow itself to become assimilated, willingly or unwillingly, to the syncretistic religion which Elagabalus wished to prevail throughout the empire.⁶ If he had lived longer, the persecution would doubtless have been resumed. But in 222 the young emperor was massacred in his palace by rebellious soldiers.

Alexander Severus

His cousin, Alexander Severus, who was not yet fourteen years old, succeeded him. The boy's mother, Julia Mamaea, was interested in Christianity; she had had discussions with Origen,⁷ and Hippolytus of Rome dedicated to her a work on the Resurrection. Alexander himself was in touch with the Christian layman, Sextus Julius Africanus, who built for him the library of the Pantheon,⁸ and Eusebius goes so far as to say, doubtless with some exaggeration, that his household was for the most part composed of Christians.⁹ During his reign, the syncretistic movement which endeavoured to unite all forms of religion continued. But it was a benevolent Syncretism, aiming at union by toleration and mutual comprehension on the part of the various cults, without any forced assimilations. Alexander had a fraternal group of images in his private chapel in which he performed his morning devotions, comprising those of certain deified emperors, and also Apollonius of Tyana, Alexander the Great, Orpheus, Abraham, and Jesus Christ.¹⁰ His biographer even assures us that he thought of building a temple to Christ, and of including him officially among the gods.¹¹ He caused to be carved on the walls of his palace the Gospel maxim, in the form given by the *Didache*: "Do not to others what thou would'st not have done to thyself."¹²

⁵ iii, 3.

⁶ Cf. *Augustan History*: *Elagabalus*, iii.

⁷ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxi, 3.

⁸ Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynch. Papyr.*, Vol. III, 1903, no. 412.

⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxviii.

¹⁰ *Augustan History*: *Severus Alexander*, iv, 29.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, iv, 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, iv, 51.

Lampridius also gives in the *Augustan History* a curious detail.¹³ Wishing to submit to popular ratification the choice of governors he proposed to nominate, he invoked in support of his proposal the usage of Jews and Christians in the nomination of their priests.

There was no question of any persecution during this reign. It seems even that the previous legislation may have been tacitly regarded as abolished, for the author of the *Life of Alexander* in the *Augustan History* was able to say that he had allowed Christians to exist: "Christianos esse passus est."¹⁴ We have here a first and very clear manifestation of the fluctuations in this period of the third century in which, in the interval between persecutions ordered by the authorities, the last-mentioned seem on several occasions to have accepted the existence of Christianity.

Circumstances were so favourable in the reign of Severus Alexander that, according to his biographer, whose narrative need not be doubted, when there was a dispute concerning ownership between the corporation of tavern keepers or *popinarii*, and the Christian body (whose collective possession of the property is explained in the next volume), the prince allowed the claim of the Christians, which was tantamount not only to the recognition of their existence but also their right to appear in court and their capacity for ownership.¹⁵

§ 3. THE PERSECUTION UNDER MAXIMIN

The Persecuting Edict of Maximin

This happy situation was changed by the disappearance in March 235 of Alexander, assassinated by his soldiers in Germany. His successor was the instigator of the murder, Maximin the Thracian, a coarse man of barbarian origin, who set out to persecute the partisans of his predecessor, and consequently the Christians amongst others. These were the subject of a special edict, yet one which, according to Eusebius, affected directly only the clergy, and more particularly the heads of churches.¹ But we know through

¹³ *Ibid.*, iv, 45.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, iv, 22.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, iv, 49.

¹ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxviii; *Chron.*, Olymp., 254. Eusebius says that the edict affected τοὺς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἀρχοντας μόνους. One might think that only bishops were referred to, but in fact all the higher clergies, including deacons, were affected.

Origen that religious edifices were burnt.² Two of his friends, Ambrose a deacon, converted from paganism *via* Gnosticism, and Protocetus a priest of Caesarea in Palestine, were arrested, and it was to them that Origen thereupon addressed his *Exhortation to the Martyrs*. Did he himself have to hide, as was said a long time afterwards? He seems not to have been threatened, at least seriously.³ In any case, his two friends and himself remained unharmed at that time.

The Persecution in Rome

Some of the highest personages in the Church were affected. The pope Pontian, together with the illustrious doctor Hippolytus who, for reasons of doctrine and discipline already explained⁴ had seceded and become the head of a dissident community, were sent to the mines of Sardinia,⁵ where the climate and, at least so far as Pontian is concerned, bad treatment very soon led to their death.⁶ Martyrdom reconciled them, and Hippolytus, before dying, instructed his followers to return to the great Church, which inscribed his name among its saints.⁷ Pontian, absent from Rome, resigned his office, and was replaced by Anteros, who in fact died before him, possibly as a martyr also.⁸

The Persecution in the East

The bishops of the other great ecclesiastical sees, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Caesarea in Cappadocia, and Carthage, were doubtless able to elude those who searched for them, for we do not hear of any of them perishing. Nevertheless, in Cappadocia and in

² In *Matt.*, xxviii.

³ Palladius (*Lausiaca History*, 147) says that Origen hid himself. But Eusebius, whom we may regard as better informed, seems certainly to suggest (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxviii) that Origen was not affected by this persecution, the *Discourse* of one of his most famous disciples, Gregory of Neocaesarea, pronounced in 238, leads to the same conclusion: the author says he has just been following the lectures of Origen for five years, without suggesting any interruption of this teaching.

⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 735 et seq.

⁵ *Liberian Catalogue*, in *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 4).

⁶ "Afflictus maceratus, fustibus defunctus est." So the *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 145).

⁷ Cf. Bk. IV.

⁸ *Liberian Catalogue*, in *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 5).

Pontus the persecution was in fact more bitter than the terms of the edict required. The legate of Cappadocia, not content with condemning members of the clergy, proceeded without distinction against all the faithful. Some disastrous earthquakes aroused the fanaticism of the pagans in those parts: it is possible that numerous accusations followed against the Christians, and in virtue of the earlier legislation which had not been abrogated, the judicial authority may have been led to pronounce capital sentences independently of the application of the edict of Maximin.⁹

Nevertheless, in the Empire as a whole, bloody executions do not seem to have taken place in large numbers. The persecution moreover did not last very long. Maximin probably was one of the first to weary of it. Very soon, moreover, he was in his turn killed by his soldiers (238), and his successors, Pupienus Maximus and Balbinus, who reigned only a few months, followed by Gordian (238-243) and Philip the Arab (243-249), took no new hostile steps against the Christians.

§ 4. THE EMPEROR PHILIP AND THE CHURCH

Was Philip a Christian?

It has been asked whether Philip himself had not been a Christian. The way in which he arrived at power, by having his predecessor killed, would not favour the hypothesis, but Eusebius mentions,¹ without confirmation, a tradition according to which the bishop of Antioch imposed a penance on the emperor before allowing him to enter his church on Easter day; St. John Chrysostom even added the detail that this bishop was St. Babylas.² But surely an event like that would have made such a stir that a more definite memory would have persisted about it. Eusebius knew of some letters from Origen to the emperor and his wife, Otacilia Severa,³ which might have thrown some light on the problem; his own attitude can therefore only lead to hesitation. On the other hand, the correspondence with Origen is at least an indication of Christian sentiments or leanings towards Christianity in the imperial

⁹ Cf. Firmilian of Caesarea, *Epist.*, *apud* Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxv, 10.

¹ *Hist. eccles.*; VI, xxxiv.

² *De s. Babyla contra Judianum et gentiles.*

³ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxvi, 3.

pair. But it is possible that it was these same dispositions that led later to the idea that Philip was a Christian. We must add that the bishop Dionysius also alludes to the Christianity of Philip,⁴ and the fact that he was born in Hauran, a district which comprised in the third century many faithful, would make this not unlikely.

But if Philip really adhered to the Christian faith and deserved the title given him by St. Jerome of "the first Christian emperor"⁵ it must be confessed that his religious belief remained very secret, and had no influence on his public life. Philip even presided at the secular Games, as a prince who retained for the ancient religion of Rome the same respect as his predecessors.⁶ In fine, we may well believe that he did not profess towards Christianity more than a sympathy analogous to that of Alexander Severus.⁷

But the Church enjoyed during his reign an almost complete peace; he even allowed—for it could not have been done without official authorisation—the bishop of Rome, Fabian, successor to Anteros, to bring back from Sardinia the body of his predecessor, St. Pontian.⁸

Popular Agitation against the Christians

One event, however, which occurred in the last months of Philip's reign, shows that hostility was constantly smouldering amongst certain elements of the population in regard to the Christians, and might burst out suddenly. At Alexandria, which shared with Rome the position of being the greatest city in the Empire, with a population of the most mixed character and one of the easiest to arouse, there was a rising in 249 against the Christians, resulting from the incitements of a "wicked diviner, and evil poet," as we are told in the letter of Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria to his colleague of Antioch, quoted by Eusebius.⁹ Some of the faithful were seized, beaten and stoned; the virgin Apollonia had her jaws

⁴ In Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxiv.

⁵ *De viris illustribus*, liv: "qui primus de regibus romanis christianus fuit."

⁶ Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, xxviii; Eutrope, *Breviarium*, ix, 3; Eusebius, *Chronicle*, Olymp. 257. On this celebration, cf. J. Gage, *Recherches sur les Jeux séculaires*, III, 3; *Le millénaire de Rome sous Philippe*, in *Révue des Etudes latines*, Vol. XI, 1933, pp. 412 et seq.

⁷ For a definite attitude against the Christian character of Philip, see K. J. Neumann, *Der Römische Staat und die allgemeine Kirche bis auf Diokletian*, Vol. I (Leipzig, 1890), pp. 245-250.

⁸ *Liber Pontificalis*, Pontianus (ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 145).

⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli.

broken and was then burnt alive; Serapion had his limbs broken and was thrown down from the top of his dwelling; innumerable houses were pillaged. The account in Eusebius adds that the sedition ended in a civil war, but we do not know whether this means that the opponents of the Christians ended by fighting amongst themselves, or that there was some intervention on the part of authority.

This sudden attack upon the Christians, though doubtless a tragical one, remained an isolated fact at that time, but it shows the violence of popular passions which were still capable of being aroused against them. Doubtless the success of the unwearying propaganda of Christians serves to explain in part these intermittent outbursts, for the third century undoubtedly constituted a period of great progress for the Church.

THE EXPANSION OF CHRISTIANITY FROM THE END OF THE SECOND TO THE BEGINNING OF THE FOURTH CENTURY¹

§ I. PALESTINE, PHOENICIA, ARABIA AND EGYPT

Palestine and Phoenicia

ALTHOUGH Palestine was the cradle of Christianity, it was not the land in which it spread most rapidly.

The work of preaching there probably met with serious obstacles and strong resistance on the part of the Jews. The Judaeo-Christians, with their narrow outlook, were not very capable of spreading Christianity.² It was in the great Greek or hellenised cities of the

¹ Bibliography.—Same as for chapters vii and xii. Add: Z. Garcia Villada, *Historia ecclesiastica de España*, Vol. I: *El cristianismo durante la dominacion romana*, Madrid, 1929, 2 vols., mentioned in the notes to the first of these chapters. The most important work remains that of Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, 2 vols., 4th edn., Leipzig, 1924. Particular works, and sources relative to the period here studied, are indicated in the notes to the present chapter.

Concerning the penetration of Christianity in countries outside the Empire from the end of the second to the beginning of the fourth centuries, see: J. Tixeront, *Les origines de l'Eglise d'Edesse*, Paris, 1888; Rubens Duval, *Histoire politique, religieuse et littéraire de l'Eglise d'Edesse jusqu'à la première croisade*, Paris, 1892; J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'Empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide*, Paris, 1904; F. Tournebize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie*, Paris, 1920; J. Marquart, *Die Entstehung der arminischen Bistümer*, in *Orientalia christiana*, Vol. XXVII (September 1932), pp. 1 et seq.; L. Duchesne, *Autonomies ecclésiastiques: Eglises séparées*, Paris, 2nd edn., 1905; J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1918 (deals in the third part with the evangelisation of the Goths).

The progress of Christian evangelisation during the first three centuries is shown in the maps in the Atlas of K. Heussi and K. Mulert, *Atlas zur Kirchengeschichte*, 2nd edn., Tübingen, 1919, and of K. Pieper, *Atlas orbis antiqui christiani* (*Atlas zur alten Missions- und Kirchengeschichte*), Düsseldorf, 1931.

² Cf. Bk. II, pp. 499-503.

coast of southern Syria, Caesarea, Ptolemais, Tyre and Beirut, that Christianity seemed to make most progress, and its recruits were comparatively few and scattered in the centres further south from Jaffa to Gaza. Even the Christian communities of the former group of cities appear in history only at the end of the second century. A Council was held in Palestine, as in many other provinces, in connection with the Easter controversy about 190,³ comprising the bishops Theophilus of Caesarea, Narcissus of Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem), Cassius of Tyre, Clarus of Ptolemais, and others whose names and sees are not mentioned by Eusebius, who refers to these other four prelates. Of these cities some such as Jerusalem and Caesarea belonged to Palestine, and others like Tyre and Ptolemais to Coelesyria; hence the ecclesiastical organisation was not as yet modelled on the administrative system, which was more artificial. Moreover, according to the synodal letter of the Phoenician and Palestinian bishops, this whole ecclesiastical region seems to have looked spontaneously towards the great Egyptian metropolis Alexandria rather than towards the Syrian metropolis Antioch. This tendency will continue.

Arabia

It was doubtless from Palestine that Christianity spread beyond the Jordan to the far-off province of Arabia. This diffusion must have begun quite early, perhaps already in the second century, to judge by the results already manifest before the middle of the third. Origen visited this country at the beginning of the reign of Caracalla, i.e. about 214, called there—and this is worthy of note—by the imperial legate, who had asked for him both from the prefect of Egypt and the bishop of Alexandria, evidently in order to get information concerning Christian beliefs. We may infer from this that this magistrate had seen Christianity at work in his country, but that he preferred to glean his information from a well-known personality such as Origen rather than from the local Christians.⁴ A little later we hear of a bishop at Bostra named Beryllus;⁵ he was a theologian, and wrote books and letters somewhat tainted with Modalism. This led to discussions between him and his colleagues, in which Origen intervened and succeeded in bringing

³ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii-xxv.

⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 15.

⁵ Eusebius, *ibid.*, VI, xx, 2, and xxxiii.

him back to more orthodox views. There were some Councils on this occasion, in the reign of Gordian, between 238 and 244, which shows that there was already a relatively numerous episcopate in the province of Arabia. Hence it is not at all surprising that the Emperor Philip and his wife Otacilia Severa, who emanated from that province, were in fact acquainted with Christianity and had been in communication with Origen.⁶

Egypt

We have little information concerning the history of Christianity in Egypt at the end of the second century. But we know through Eusebius⁷ that the persecution of Septimius Severus led to numerous martyrdoms not only at Alexandria but in the Thebaid, that is in southern Egypt. Fifty districts in Egypt, including Cyrenaica, possessed Christian communities before the Council of Nicaea, and more than forty were episcopal sees.⁸ The Council of Alexandria in 320 or 321 numbered a hundred bishops.⁹ Already in 250 at the time of the Decian persecution, certificates of sacrifices found in papyri¹⁰ were distributed even in villages. True, these were given not only to Christians,¹¹ though one might think that those free from the slightest suspicion of Christianity would not always have had to submit themselves to a formality which in itself evidently did not affect them. In any case, later martyrological documents show that at the beginning of the fourth century there were numerous Christian villages.¹² Egypt has thus a right to be included amongst the countries of the Empire in which Christianity had won a notable part of the population in the course of the first three centuries. But the way in which it was propagated escapes us.

Cyrenaica

The Pentapolis, in the West of Egypt, had provided the Church with some of its earliest believers. Not to mention the Cyrenean

⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 761.

⁷ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, i-iii.

⁸ A list of these, with an indication of the sources of information, is given in Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, IV, ch. 3, 3rd section, 7.

⁹ Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, Vol. I, pp. 363-372.

¹⁰ Cf. *infra*, pp. 791 *et seq.*

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*

¹² *Acts of St. Peter of Alexandria*. Cf. St. Athanasius, *Apologia contra Arianos*, xxxv.

who helped Jesus to carry his cross,¹³ several of his compatriots were witnesses of Pentecost,¹⁴ and if some were included among those who opposed St. Stephen,¹⁵ others were converted,¹⁶ such as the Lucius who played a part in the founding of the Church at Antioch.¹⁷ Hence it is not surprising that Christian propaganda was well received quite early in this country. In any case, in the second half of the third century each of the five cities, Cyrene, Ptolemais, Berenice, Arsinoe and Sozuse had apparently its own bishop, and this episcopate, like that of Egypt, recognised as head the Bishop of Alexandria.¹⁸

§ 2. NORTHERN SYRIA, ASIA MINOR, AND NEIGHBOURING REGIONS

Northern Syria

Northern Syria, with its great metropolis of Antioch, was already strongly penetrated by Christianity in the second century. Its evangelisation continued to make progress certainly in the third century, at the end of which this province ranked among those in which the Christian religion had sufficient followers to vie in numbers with the other religions. A case like that of Paul of Samosata¹ shows that the Bishop of Antioch was a power in the city in the second half of the third century. On the other hand, we see from the signatures at the Council of Nicaea that there were no less than twenty-two bishops in Coelesyria in the first quarter of the fourth century. Among them figure two *chorepiscopi* or "country bishops,"² and epigraphical testimonies confirm the existence of rural Christian communities in those parts.³ We may even wonder whether, contrary to what happened in the West, the country districts were not sometimes won more speedily to the Faith, at least relatively, than some of the great cities in which the resistance of

¹³ *Matt.* xxvii, 32; *Mark* xv, 21; *Luke* xxiii, 26.

¹⁴ *Acts* ii, 10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vi, 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, xi, 20.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, xiii, 1.

¹⁸ According to the letters of Dionysius of Alexandria (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxvi).

¹ Cf. Bk. IV.

² On the *chorepiscopi*, cf. Bk. IV.

³ Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, 2nd edn., p. 111.

the ancient cults was particularly strong. Thus, in spite of the importance of its Christian community, Antioch, as we see from the writings of Libanius, was still in the middle of the fourth century one of the centres of the pagan opposition.⁴

Edessa

It was certainly from Syria that Christianity spread to the kingdom of Edessa or Osrhoene, where, as we have seen,⁵ it had already made considerable progress before the end of the second century. These conversions were perhaps due mainly to Jewish Christians, whose activity seems to be reflected in the legend of Addai, the disciple of St. Thomas. But at the beginning of the third century, the young church of Osrhoene manifested its dependence on the Syrian church when the bishop Palout of Edessa received the imposition of hands from Serapion of Antioch.⁶ This event was practically contemporary with the conversion of the king himself, Abgar IX, who reigned from 179 to 214,⁷ after which this State was reunited to the Empire. The conversion of the king naturally had greatly influenced the progress of Christianity in the lands of the Euphrates. Already in the time of the Easter controversy (about 190), there were several bishops in Osrhoene.⁸ At Edessa, the Christian church was a prominent edifice; when a flood destroyed it in 201 this fact was mentioned in the account of the catastrophe conserved⁹ in a local chronicle.¹⁰ From the time of Abgar, the Chris-

⁴ See also St. John Chrysostom, *De sanctis martyribus*, Sermo i, and *Ad populum Antiochenum homilia*, xviii, 1, 2. Cf. J. Zeiller, *Paganus*, Paris-Fribourg, 1917, p. 66, and H. Gregoire, *La "conversion" de Constantin*, in *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, 1930, pp. 231 et seq.

⁵ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 369-370.

⁶ W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents relative to the establishment of Christianity*, London, 1864, p. 72.

⁷ Eusebius, *Chron.*, ann. Abrah., 2234-5; Sextus Julius Africanus, *Chron.*; M. J. Routh, *Reliquiae Sacrae*, Oxford, 1846, II, p. 307. Cf. Bardesanes, *Book of the Law of Countries* (W. Cureton, *Spicilegium syriacum*, London, 1899, p. 20); Langlois, *Collect. des Historiens de l'Arménie*, Vol. I, p. 92. J. Ortiz de Urbina, *Le origini del cristianesimo in Edessa*, in *Gregorianum*, XV (1934), pp. 82-91, calls in question, but without much reason, the reality of the conversion of Abgar IX.

⁸ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii. The existence of several bishoprics does not follow from the text in a way that is absolutely certain, but in any case it is true of the Osrhoenian communities.

⁹ Ed. Haller, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. IX, 1, p. 86.

¹⁰ L. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 451.

tian Church of Edessa, with the poet and philosopher Bardesanes as one of its glories,¹¹ made great progress. Lastly, from the kingdom of Edessa Christianity must have spread into the western provinces of the Parthian kingdom, where we find it established from the third century,¹² and into Armenia, where it was completely established by the beginning of the fourth century at the latest.¹³

Roman Armenia

But, at any rate in Roman Armenia, its propagation goes further back, for bishop Dionysius of Alexandria (middle of the third century) wrote to the Armenian Christian communities governed by the bishop Merusanes a letter on penance at the time of the Novatian schism.¹⁴

Asia Minor

This propagation had probably originated in Asia Minor, which was of all the regions of the Roman Empire the one in which the Christian faith had made the most rapid progress. We have seen how successful it was in Bithynia at the commencement of the second century.¹⁵ At the end of this same century, councils were held in Phrygia in consequence of troubles due to the Montanist heresy,¹⁶ and Dionysius of Alexandria in the next century declared that this province possessed "the most populous churches."¹⁷ The pagan rhetorician Lucius of Antioch makes the pseudo-prophet Alexandria of Abonoutica complain of the great number of atheists and Christians in Pontus¹⁸ in the time of Marcus Aurelius, and about 190 the bishops of this country wrote to Pope Victor about the Easter question.¹⁹

¹¹ On Bardesanes, cf. *supra*, p. 640, n. 74.

¹² On the previous period, cf. Bk. I, pp. 368-370.

¹³ On the evangelisation of Armenia, cf. *infra*, pp. 786-787.

¹⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlv. Merusanes evidently had his see in Roman Armenia, and not in the kingdom of Armenia, for the letter sent to him by Dionysius was concerned with the failings of the Christians in the Decian persecution. Cf. L. Duchesne, *L'Arménie chrétienne dans l'Histoire ecclésiastique d'Eusèbe*, in *Mélanges Nicole*, Geneva, 1909, pp. 105-107.

¹⁵ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 363, 391.

¹⁶ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, VII, vii.

¹⁸ *Alexander the pseudo-prophet*, by Lucian, xxv.

¹⁹ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii.

On the other hand, the inner Pontus was methodically evangelised only in the third century. Phedimus, the first known bishop of Amasia, the most important city in the part called Galatic Pontus, lived in the first half of this century. He gave to a disciple of Origen named Theodore, also called Gregory, and his brother Athenodorus, another spiritual son of Origen's, the task of preaching the faith in the country of Neocaesarea, situated much more to the east in Polemoniac Pontus. Gregory, whose persuasive preaching and miracles won for him the names of "Great" and of "Thaumaturgus," preached in town and country with great success. Comana, one of the towns, together with Amasia and Neocaesarea, in the mountainous region of Pontus, asked him for a bishop: he consecrated the first pastor of this new diocese, by name Alexander.²⁰

Cappadocia, in the central part of Asia Minor, also had its Christian communities from the second century. The famous Thundering Legion, in which a fairly large number of Christian soldiers had very probably served from the time of Marcus Aurelius,²¹ had for a long time had its quarters there, and by reason of local recruiting, drew its men largely from the region of Melitene, towards the eastern end of this province. Nevertheless the metropolis itself, Caesarea, begins to figure in Christian history only about the year 200, when its bishop Alexander, trained in the Catechetical School of Alexandria by Pantaenus and Clement, was thrown in prison on the occasion of the persecution of Septimius Severus.²²

§ 3. THE HELLENIC PENINSULA AND ILLYRICUM

The Hellenic Peninsula

We lack information concerning the growth of the Church in Greece, Macedonia and Thrace during the third century. These parts were evangelised and already possessed organised Christian communities in the Apostolic period, and doubtless the progress

²⁰ A biography of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus is given by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxx; VII, xiv. We have also a panegyric on him by St. Gregory of Nyssa, representing the Pontic tradition concerning Gregory Thaumaturgus in the next century. His own works likewise give information concerning his life. On this, cf. Bk. IV.

²¹ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 402-403.

²² Cf. *supra*, p. 758.

known to have taken place in the second century continued during the following one. But at the beginning of the fourth century we find that bishops of the Asiatic provinces were in an overwhelming majority at the Council of Nicea, while there were less than a dozen bishops from Thrace, Macedonia and Greece. Doubtless the sees of Philippi, Debelum, Anchialo, Nicopolis in Epirus, Thessalonica, Berea, Larissa, Athens, Corinth, Cenchre, Lacedaemon, and Byzantium also go back, some to the first and others to the second century.¹ The only new names we find at Nicea are those of Stobi in Macedonia, Euboea and Thebes in Greece, and Hephaestia in Lemnos, and we are led to infer that little more than four new sees had been established in the third century. But that is practically all we are able to say concerning the ecclesiastical development of the hellenic peninsula during the period between Septimius Severus and Diocletian.

Illyricum

Doubtless we must place in this same period the founding of the first churches in Danubian Illyricum and Dalmatia, for we know of none there before. These lands may have been reached earlier by Christian preaching,² but concrete results in the form of constituted churches do not appear there before the second half of the third century. True, we then find these churches fairly numerous, and provided with a sufficiently complete hierarchy to lead us to think they had not just been founded. One of them, that of Pettau in Noricum, had at its head at the time of the Diocletian persecution an exegete of some fame destined to be martyred, Victorinus,³ whose works were apparently not addressed to converts just out of their catechumenate.⁴ A bishop of Salona, the metropolis of Dalmatia, Venantius, was perhaps martyred in a local persecution in the days of Aurelian.⁵ But everywhere else the first authentic witnesses for Christianity were victims of the persecution under Diocletian (304 and following years), and these give no light as to any earlier

¹ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 364-365.

² Cf. Bk. II, p. 361.

³ St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, lxxiv.

⁴ The Commentary of Victorinus on the *Apocalypse* has been published by J. Haussleiter in the *Vienna Corpus*, Vol. XLIX, in 1916. Other fragments by Victorinus in Migne, P.L., Vol. V. 281-316.

⁵ Cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, pp. 49 et seq.

Christian past in the Illyrian region. They belonged to practically all the provinces of Illyricum, and at the same time came from very varying states of life: in Lower Moesia we have the soldiers Julius, Hesychius, Nicander, Marcion, Pasocrates and Valentian, and perhaps Dasius of Durostorum;⁶ in Riparian Dacia, the exorcist Hermes; in Eastern Pannonia, the bishop Irenæus, the deacon Demetrius, the hermit gardener Sinerotas, a woman named Anastasia, and some consecrated virgins whose names are unknown, at Sirmium; in Western Pannonia, the bishop Quirinus of Siscia; in Noricum, Victorinus of Pettau and Florianus of Lauriacum, some time head of the Chancery of the governor of the province; in Rhoetia, the penitent Afra at Augusta Vindelicorum (Augsburg); in Dalmatia, the bishop Domnius at Salona, and in the same town the priest Asterius, the deacon Septimius, Anastasius the fuller, and also Felix, Victoricus, Antiochianus, Paulinianus, Gaianus and Telius, whose status is not known.⁷

§ 4. GAUL

Progress of Evangelisation Towards the End of the Second Century

In Gaul, the third century saw an important step forward in the expansion of Christianity. To the churches in the Rhone basin were added others in regions further removed from the Mediterranean starting point.

After the persecution of 177, one of the most highly esteemed priests of the community of Lyons, Irenæus, who like Bishop Pothinus was originally from Asia Minor and a disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna, fortunately escaped death, and succeeded to the aged martyr.

⁶ The *Passion* of Dasius of Durostorum (published by F. Cumont in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. XVI, 1897, pp. 5 *et seq.*), put to death for refusing to play the part of a king of the Saturnalia because he was a Christian, and because this act would, as he said, involve immolation, certainly seems to be only a pious romance. But the existence of a martyr named Dasius is beyond doubt. Cf. J. Zeiller, *op. cit.*, pp. 110 *et seq.*

⁷ Cf. J. Zeiller, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-128, for particulars of the various *Passions*. Père Delehaye, *Nouvelles fouilles de Salona*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. XLVII, 1929, pp. 77 *et seq.*, has shown that the attribution of the title "soldiers" to Antiochanus, Gaianus, Paulinianus and Telius, arose from a wrong interpretation of the *Hieronymian Martyrology* (in which *milites*, soldiers, has more than once been confused with *miliaria*, milestones).

We know¹ that Irenæus governed the church of Lyons until the reign of Septimius Severus. But he was not a man to be satisfied with allowing it to remain just as it was when he was placed over it, and it may well be that, as a result of a new movement of Gallic evangelisation started by him, there arose a certain number of new Christian communities at increasing distances from Lyons, and in particular at Tournus, Chalon and Autun, if these were not already in existence before his episcopate. At Autun has been discovered the inscription of Pectorius,² one of the jewels of Christian epigraphy and one of the most significant testimonies to Eucharistic belief; part of it at least—for two portions can be distinguished—goes back to the end of the second or the beginning of the third century. Christianity at Autun must thus have had a very early beginning. Dijon, Langres, Besançon, and even the Rhine country were perhaps reached in this period. Does not Irenæus, moreover, speak of "Germans who have heard the word of Christ"?³ It would seem that this can only mean inhabitants of provinces formed in the original Gallic territory and bearing the name of Germany.

The first three towns mentioned, Tournus, Chalon and Autun, had martyrs whose names have been already mentioned,⁴ Alexander Epipodes, Marcellus, Valentine, and Symphorian,⁵ who may have been contemporaries of Irenæus. But it is equally possible that they may have been later than his time, or on the other hand, as the Church of Lyons had already extended in the episcopate of Pothinus, they may have been put to death at a date fairly close to that of the martyrs of Lyons.

The Letter of the Church of Lyons, however, is silent as to martyrs who perished elsewhere, and this tells against the second

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 756.

² Cf. J. B. Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense*, Vol. I, Paris, 1852, pp. 554 *et seq.*; *Corpus inscriptionum graecarum*, IV, 582. An abundant bibliography on this inscription is given in the *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne*, article *Autun*, Vol. I, colls. 3194-3198, and in the *Handbuch der altchristlichen Epigraphik* of C. M. Kauffmann, pp. 178-180.

³ *Adversus haereses*, I, x, 2.

⁴ Cf. *supra*, p. 756.

⁵ The *Passion* of St. Symphorian, however, puts the martyrdom in the reign of Aurelian. Although there was not, as we shall see, an organised persecution in that reign, there may have been local outbreaks of persecution, the tradition of which was conserved in Gaul, for several Gallic martyrdoms are ascribed to the time of Aurelian in the *Passions*; but it must be admitted that these martyrological compositions deserve little credence. Cf. G. Bardy, *Les martyrs bourguignons de la persécution d'Aurélian*, in *Annales de Bourgogne*, VIII (1936), pp. 321-348.

hypothesis. But various *Passions*, unfortunately already of a somewhat late date and legendary in appearance, mention some of these martyrs in connection with Irenæus.⁶ These may retain some trace of real events. It is in any case worthy of note that they do not represent any martyr as an organiser of these Christian communities, or as a bishop. Thus they might reflect in some measure the situation which may have existed still in the time of St. Irenæus and even continued for a part of the third century: if there were already several Christian communities in Gaul, only one bishop—apart from those in the region of Narbonne—would seem to have governed all these, namely the bishop of Lyons.

Lyons the Sole Bishopric in Gaul until the Third Century

Such is at least the thesis defended by Mgr. Duchesne,⁷ and solid arguments are not lacking in favour of it. Until the middle of the third century, no other episcopal see is mentioned in Gaul, apart from the Narbonne country and the Mediterranean coast. This state of things would resemble that which seems to have existed at the same time in Northern Italy, for from the second to the third century there are no traces of sees in that country other than those of Milan and Ravenna.⁸ The scholarly bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia in Cilicia, in a treatise composed a little before his elevation to the episcopate (392-393),⁹ says explicitly that in the church of the early days there was at first only one bishop in a province, and then some time later, two or three or more, and that this custom lingered on in the West. True, Harnack, in his work *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*¹⁰ has replied that the witness of Theodore of Mopsuestia is too far removed from the facts to be decisive. But almost a century earlier, Eusebius, when enumerating in his *Ecclesiastical History*¹¹ the episcopal letters written about the year 196 concerning the Easter question, mentions one emanating from "the various Christian communities of Gaul of which Irenæus was

⁶ Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, Vol. I, pp. 45-56.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 45-56.

⁸ Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, pp. 495-496.

⁹ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *In epistulas sancti Pauli commentarius*, ed. Swete, London, 1882. Vol. II, p. 124.

¹⁰ 2nd edn., pp. 373-395.

¹¹ V, xxiii, 3.

the bishop.”¹² It may also be objected against Duchesne’s thesis that in the early Church the bishop alone consecrated the Eucharist, and that liturgical life was, so to speak, impossible without him: what then would have been the life of the various gallic Christian communities in existence besides that of Lyons, if they had no real pastor other than the bishop of that city? Must we say that already other liturgical practices arose out of these very circumstances, without leaving any immediate trace in the texts? An argument in this sense might be supported by the situation of the Church of Egypt, where until the third century there was only one bishop, that of Alexandria, though already many Christian communities were in existence there.¹³ There remains also the silence of the texts as to gallic sees other than those of the Narbonne district and Lyons before the middle of the third century, and the analogy between the situation thus presented by Gaul with other provinces such as those of Upper Italy. Lastly, we must add that the episcopal lists of Gaul, with the exception of those of Lyons and the Narbonne, do not take us back earlier than the year 250 in the most favourable cases,¹⁴ and a gallo-roman writer like Sulpicius Severus himself comments on the late evangelisation of his country, “*serius trans Alpes Dei religione suscepta*.”¹⁵ Once again, this does not apply to the whole of Gaul, for the evangelisation of the Provençal coasts may have begun towards the end of the apostolic age, and the church of Lyons was doubtless constituted about 150. Outside these privileged zones, Christianity took some time to spread.

New Episcopal Sees in the Third Century

Perhaps, for the very reason that towards the middle of the third century the evangelisation of Gaul seemed to have made little progress, a wider and more methodical missionary effort was

¹² The Greek word we have translated above as “communities” is *Παροικία*. Harnack (*loc. cit.*) thinks that this means a “diocese.” But the term did not take this meaning till the fourth century. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *Paroecia*, in *Archivum latinum medii aevi*, Bulletin Du Cange, 1927, pp. 195-205, and *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 60 et seq. K. Müller (*Kleine Beiträge zur Altengeschichte*, 18; *Parochie und Diocese im Abendland*, in *Zeitsch. für die neutestamentlich. Wissenschaft*, XXXIII (1933), pp. 149-185) also supports Duchesne’s interpretation.

¹³ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 481-482.

¹⁴ Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l’ancienne Gaule*, pp. 3-29.

¹⁵ *Chronicon*, II, xxxii.

judged necessary. The episcopal historian of the sixth century, St. Gregory of Tours, relates in his *Historia Francorum* that, during the consulate of Decius and Gratus (250) seven bishops came from Rome and founded sees, Gatian the church of Tours, Trophimus the church of Arles, Paul that of Narbonne, Saturninus that of Toulouse, Dionysius that of Paris, Austremonius that of Clermont, and Martial that of Limoges. This group is certainly legendary, and its mystic number of seven warns us of this. At the very time which the Gregorian tradition assigns to Trophimus, Arles had a bishop, Marcian by name, mentioned in a letter of St. Cyprian, in which he appears as an adherent of the Novatian schism. But Marcian was not the first bishop of Arles: from the beginning of the fifth century tradition gave this title to St. Trophimus,¹⁶ who, though not possessing the apostolic character which local ambitions attributed to him, belonged at the latest to the first half of the third century.¹⁷ This case may be compared with that of the church of Vienne, which, when once separated from that of Lyons (if we accept their original union),¹⁸ had successively at its head, before the Council of Arles in 314, four bishops, Crescens, Zacharius, Martinus (probably martyred in the persecution of Diocletian) and Verus; the first-named would thus be dated between 200 and 250.¹⁹ On the other hand, if the *Passion* of St. Saturninus of Toulouse,²⁰ seeming to confirm the statement of Gregory, puts at 250 the beginning of the mission of this founder of the church of Toulouse, it is most likely that this is really the date of his martyrdom, and the conservation of so precise a memory of the year in which he began his apostolic labours is hardly likely. Thus, the sees of Arles and Toulouse would have earlier origins than those given them by Gregory of Tours. In view of the situation of Narbonne and the importance of this town, it would be natural to think that the see of Narbonne was at least as ancient as that of Toulouse. For the rest, the foundation of the see of Paris might well be put, in accordance with the episcopal lists, a little after the

¹⁶ Cf. Bk. II, p. 362.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁸ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 399-402.

¹⁹ Cf. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, Vol. I, 2nd edn., p. 204. It has been said already (Bk. II, p. 361) that Crescens, a disciple of St. Paul, may have evangelised Gaul, but that this would not make him the founder of the church of Vienne.

²⁰ Ruinart, *Acta martyrum sincera*, p. 110.

middle of the third century. The same applies to those of Rheims and Trèves, the four holders of which were present at the Council of Arles in 314.²¹ This would be the best way of explaining a passage in St. Cyprian which has been interpreted differently in the controversy between Duchesne and Harnack. In letter lviii, Cyprian says that Faustinus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote to Pope Stephen about 258, in his own name and in those of "ceteri episcopi nostri in eadem provincia constituti." Duchesne thought that this might mean bishops of the Narbonne district as well as the rest of Gaul, which even at that date would have no other bishop than that of Lyons. But why would Lyons then be the leader in respect to the Narbonne country? It would all be simple if we could admit that from the middle of the third century Gaul, apart from the Narbonne country, had already some episcopal sees in addition to that of Lyons. At the same time, the sees of Limoges and Tours do not seem to be prior to the year 300, if we make use of the same basis of chronological computation. That of Clermont might be put in the last years of the third century, as the fourth holder of the see died in 384 or 385.²²

The group indicated by Gregory of Tours is thus strongly controverted.²³ But the fact of a more marked progress in the evangelisation of Gaul in the third century is certain, and it is natural that Rome should be connected with it, as would seem to be confirmed by a passage in St. Fortunatus who, like Gregory of Tours, says that Saturninus went from Rome to Toulouse.²⁴

In any case Christianity then reached several large cities in the Gallic provinces furthest removed from the Rhône basin, which alone had been reached in the second century: Paris, Rheims, and Trèves had churches about the year 250. The founder of the see

²¹ Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, 2nd edn., Vol. I, pp. 8-16.

²² Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, 2nd edn., Vol. I, p. 20.

²³ But this does not oblige us to reject as legendary the names of the traditional founders of the churches of Arles, Narbonne and Toulouse, not to mention others, as is done by G. de Manteyer, *Les origines chrétiennes de la Ile Narbonnaise, des Alpes-Maritimes et de la Viennoise*, Gap, 1924 (Extract from *Bulletin de la Société d'études des Hautes-Alpes*, 1923-1924). L. Levillain (*Saint Trophime, confesseur et métropolitain d'Arles, et la Mission des sept en Gaule*, in *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France*, Vol. XIII, 1927, pp. 145-189) has pointed out the quite arbitrary nature of this thesis.

²⁴ Fortunatus, II, viii. This Roman origin of St. Saturninus is not mentioned in the *Passion* of the saint.

of Rouen, Mallonus, previously bishop of Paris, flourished before the year 300; the sees of Sens,²⁵ Soissons and Châlons have a like antiquity,²⁶ and the same is true of Bourges²⁷ and Bordeaux²⁸ south of the Loire. Although the country districts must have remained refractory or hardly affected until the time of St. Martin, who undertook their apostolate at the end of the fourth century, the Christianisation of Gaul, which had already at the end of the second century, according to the testimony of Irenæus,²⁹ penetrated thoroughly a part of the population, was progressing well when in 311 the hostility of the Empire towards the Church came to an end.

§ 5. BRITAIN AND SPAIN

Britain

Great Britain, which bounded the western domain of Rome, had at least some Christians about this time. The first Christian missions to this country were evidently later than those in Gaul. The story taken by Venerable Bede from the *Liber Pontificalis*, to the effect that a British king named Lucius had asked Pope Eleutherius for missionaries at the end of the second century and became a convert together with a number of his subjects, is obviously legendary. For at that time there was no king in Roman Britain,¹ and an independent British chieftain would not have been called by the Roman name of Lucius. True, Tertullian shortly afterwards includes Britain among the countries in which places

²⁵ The third holder of the see is mentioned in 475 (Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epist.*, VII, 5), and so the church easily goes back to the end of the third century.

²⁶ L. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, Vol. I, pp. 8-16.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

²⁸ Irenæus says (*Adversus haereses*, I, Praefatio) that he had had to learn to speak the Celtic tongue, which implies a prolonged contact with indigenous elements.

²⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, I, iv.

¹ Cf. Hamack, *Der Brief des britischen Königs Lucius an den Papst Eleutheros*, in *Sitzungsberichte der K. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1904, pp. 909-916. Nevertheless, the request for missionaries by a native chieftain and his conversion together with his tribe would not be in itself at all strange, for we find in the fourth century Frigida, queen of the country of the Marcomans (the present Bohemia), acting in a very similar manner by writing to St. Ambrose (St. Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii*, xxxvi) to ask to be instructed together with her subjects, and becoming a Christian with them shortly afterwards.

inaccessible to the Romans² have been subjected to Christ. But more worthy of acceptance, because less oratorical, is the assertion of Origen who less than half a century later also speaks of Britain as a country knowing the Christian religion.³ In any case, at the end of the third century there existed several Christian communities, which had their martyrs in the persecution of Diocletian: St. Alban at Verulam, and two other victims at Caerleon (Legionum Urbs).⁴ Lastly, the fact that some ten years later, three bishops, those of Londinium (London), Eboracum (York) and Colonia Lindensium (Lincoln), were present at the Council of Arles (314) shows that the Church must have been fairly strongly organised in the British provinces before the end of the era of persecution.

² *Adversus Judaeos*, VII.

³ *Homil. IV. in Ezechiel*, i.

[The above represents practically all that can be said for certain concerning the introduction of Christianity into Great Britain. The supposition that St. Paul visited this country is rightly described by Canon Bright (*Early English Church History*, Oxford, 1897) as a "pious fancy" (p. 1). As to the story of Pudens and Claudia, he says that this "would prove nothing, were it made good, as to a Church in Britain at that time." He adds: "In short, we may pass by all attempts at discovery of an apostolic foundation for the British Church: the theories which modern enthusiasm has created are as shadowy as the Greek fiction about Aristobulus, ordained by St. Paul as a bishop for Britain—or the Welsh story of Bran the Blessed, father of Caractacus, who brought to Britain the faith he had learned in Rome—or that beautiful mediæval romance which brought St. Joseph of Arimathea with twelve companions to Alavon or Glastonbury" (p. 3). As to the supposed mission sent by Pope Eleutherius to Lucius, Canon Bright remarks that this presents "no intrinsic improbability," and adds that "it is certain that not many years after the accession of Eleutherius—probably, indeed, between A.D. 196 and 201—Tertullian exultingly declares that places in Britain not yet reached by Romans were subject to Christ." He thinks Tertullian must have had some reason for making this statement, and concludes: "we cannot reasonably doubt that some Christians did cross the Channel to our shore during the second century, if not earlier, and planted here and there some settlements of the Church. It was 'almost certainly from Gaul'—certainly not, as far as we can judge, directly from the East—that these outposts, so to speak, of the advancing spiritual kingdom were sent forth among the Roman provincials of Britain." Later research has tended to confirm the judgment of this learned Anglican historian in every respect.—TR.]

⁴ *Mart. Hieron.*, June 22nd, V. Ed. De Rossi-Duchesne, *Act. SS.*, Novembris, Vol. II, i, p. (lxxv), and ed. Quentin-Delchaye, *Act. SS.*, Novembris, Vol. II, 2, p. 331; *Chronica Minora*, Vol. III, ed. Mommsen, *Monum. Germ., Auctores antiquissimi*, Vol. VII, p. 31; Gildas, *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae*, and Bede, *Hist. eccles.*, I, 7. It has been urged against the historical character of these martyrdoms that the persecution of Diocletian did not extend either to Britain or to Gaul, governed by Constantius Chlorus, who avoided the shedding of blood (cf. *infra*, Bk. IV). But the undeniable goodwill of Constantius towards Christians does not exclude some isolated executions, due to particular circumstances.

Spain

In Spain, we are still in obscurity until the middle of the third century. St. Irenæus⁵ and Tertullian⁶ already speak of the churches of this country. But we have to wait half a century longer for precise information. The correspondence of St. Cyprian,⁷ bishop of Carthage, consulted, because of the great authority he enjoyed everywhere, about two Spanish bishops, Basilides of Legio (Leon) and Asturica Augusta (Astorga), and Martial of Emerita (Merida), who had lapsed in the persecution of Decius, implies an already developed ecclesiastical organisation of the Spanish provinces. For we find, besides the two guilty bishops, Bishop Felix of Caesar Augusta (Saragossa), and another, Sabinus, whose see is not specified, and also indications of a numerous episcopate which already met in councils. Three years later, the successor to Felix of Saragossa, Fructuosus, was martyred with his deacons in the persecution of Valerian, and half a century later still in the persecution of Diocletian, Christian blood flowed at Seville, Cordova, Calahorra, Complutum, Italica, Barcelona, and Gerona, and about the same time the first council on which we are fairly well informed in pre-Constantinian times met at Illiberis (Elvira), consisting of a bishop of Galicia, two from Tarragona, three from Lusitania, eight from Carthagina, and twenty-one from Batia. These facts show that the whole of Spain must have been evangelised, and christianised to a considerable extent, in the course of the third century. True, our information, as for other parts of the West, concerns only cities, and even in these the numerical importance of the Christian communities is unknown to us.

§ 6. AFRICA

Christianity Solidly Planted in Africa at the End of the Second Century

The martyrdom of about a dozen Christians of Scillium, executed at Carthage in 180, as we mentioned in a previous book,¹ shows the existence of a Christian community in a little town of the

⁵ *Adv. haeres.*, I, iv, 2.

⁶ *Adv. Jud.*, vii.

⁷ St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxvii.

¹ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 404-405.

Proconsular province in the time of the last of the Antonines. Christianity had therefore already obtained a solid footing in Roman Africa in the latter half of the second century. After the bloody events of the beginning of the reign of Commodus, the success of the evangelical preaching seems to have been facilitated by a period of calm which lasted nearly twenty-five years.

When the persecution burst out afresh about 200, Tertullian wrote of the "thousands of Christians who offered themselves to the blows of the persecutor."² He even goes so far as to imply, in the famous passage which says that Christians were already so numerous that their withdrawal would render the cities practically deserts,³ that the majority of the inhabitants of the towns professed Christianity at that time. The rhetorical exaggeration is obvious, but it may not go so far as wholly to misrepresent something which was happening under his very eyes, something of which he spoke with knowledge, and which he could hardly describe falsely to his readers and compatriots. The extension of the repressive activity of the magistrates shows likewise that there were at that time faithful in all the parts of Northern Africa, Proconsular Africa, Numidia and Mauretania. *Passions* as reliable as the *Acts* of Perpetua⁴ put us in presence of a very complete ecclesiastical hierarchy. We know also through Tertullian that the African Christian communities comprised members of the aristocracy as well as the more humble classes of the servile population.

Progress in the Third Century

The period of lasting peace which in Africa continued down to the episcopate of St. Cyprian, who assumed the see of Carthage in 249 on the eve of the Decian persecution, was favourable to the Church, which profited by it and made further progress. A first Council of Carthage, held probably shortly after the year 200, gathered together under the presidency of Bishop Agrippinus, seventy bishops of Proconsular Africa and Numidia.⁵ A second

² Cf. *supra*, pp. 753.

³ *Apologeticus*, xxxvii.

⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 754-755.

⁵ St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxi, 4; lxxiii, 3. The date is questioned cf. Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, Vol. I, pp. 154-155, and especially the notes. Dom Leclercq would prefer a date earlier than 200. But the preoccupation of the conciliar discussions with the question of heretical baptism, which became acute

council, in the time of the bishop Donatus, a contemporary of Pope Fabian, between 236 and 248, already numbered ninety bishops.⁶ Another, convoked a few years later by St. Cyprian (autumn of 256), gathered together almost the same number from the Proconsular Province, Numidia and Mauretania.⁷ It certainly seems that the number of bishops in relation to the Christian population increased much more rapidly in Africa than for instance in Gaul or Upper Italy. But the crowd of apostates under the Decian persecution,⁸ and some ten years later the number of martyrs who vindicated the honour of the Christian name under the Emperor Valerian,⁹ equally shows the remarkable growth of the African Church in the course of the third century.

Evangelisation Beyond the Roman Frontiers

The evangelical message even seems to have gone outside the frontiers of the Empire towards the south of the African provinces at that time. Certainly these boundaries were somewhat undefined, and more than one Moorish tribe belonged nominally to Rome and yet was not effectively subject to her. To the west of Numidia, in the two provinces of Caesarian Mauretania (the modern departments of Algiers and Oran) and of Mauretania Tingitana (Morocco), the Roman occupation never extended beyond a comparatively thin zone, and the native tribes of Moors or Berbers, who were independent or semi-independent, and whose territories extended sometimes almost as far as the coast, occupied the country between the Roman towns and fortified posts. Through them one passed gradually from the Roman territory to the outside world of the Sahara. The preaching of Christianity must also have passed quite early from Roman Africa to Barbarian Africa, for Tertullian asserts¹⁰ that various tribes of Berbers and several parts of the

in the third century, and the silence of Tertullian as to African councils in his *De jejuniis*, which is later than 213, and in which he speaks of Eastern synods as a glory of those churches, seem to compel us to put the council about the year 220, as Duchesne has done (*Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 422).

⁶ St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lv, 10. On the error in interpretation, which has led to the supposition that this council, in which a bishop of Lambessa was deposed, was held in the latter town and not at Carthage, cf. Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, Vol. I, p. 162, n. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, lii. Cf. also Hefele-Leclercq, *op. cit.*, pp. 165 *et seq.*

⁸ Cf. *infra*, p. 795.

⁹ Cf. *infra*, pp. 804-805.

¹⁰ *Adversus Judaeos*, vii: "Getulorum varietates et Maurorum multi fines."

Mauretanian country already knew of the Gospel at the beginning of the third century. Among the innumerable bishoprics in Africa which are mentioned in the next century, several must have been situated in Moorish localities. But it would not be easy to describe these, especially as the political fluctuations and in particular the variations of the Roman frontier had, so far as we can infer from epigraphical or other remains, no consequences from the religious point of view. "The Moors became Christian at the same time as the Roman populations. . . . Evangelisation on this frontier has no history distinct from that of Africa in general. We know of no apostle of the Moors; we nowhere find a church or an ecclesiastical organisation peculiar to this race. Christianity infiltrated among them gradually as in the province itself; the sees were founded in the midst of groups of the population more or less removed towards the interior. But it was always the African Church."¹¹

§ 7. ITALY

In Italy, Christianity must also have made progress during the periods of calm between the persecutions of the third century.

Upper Italy

When the century opened, only three episcopal sees were established, so far as we know, between the Alps and Sicily: Rome, Milan and Ravenna. In the case of the two latter, it is only by a chronological approximation that we can put their beginnings before the end of the second century.¹ The third century almost doubles the number for Northern Italy alone. Aquileia, destined to become one day, like Milan and Ravenna, a great ecclesiastical metropolis, doubtless had its first bishop, called Hermagoras in the episcopal lists,² round about the year 250, for the fifth bishop, Theodore, signed the decrees of the Council of Arles in 314. The signatures of the Council of Sardica in 343 have the names of the

¹¹ Duchesne, *Autonomies ecclésiastiques, Eglises séparées*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1905, p. 286.

¹ Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, pp. 495-496.

² Episcopal lists of Aquileia in De Rubeis, *Monumenta Ecclesiae Aquileiensis*, Strasburg (Argentina), 1740, app. 6; *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores*, Vol. XII, p. 367.

sixth bishop of Verona and the fifth of Brescia, and accordingly the creation of these two sees must also go back much farther than the year 300.

The Italian Peninsula

In the Italian peninsula, the growth in the number of episcopal sees, probably greater in proportion to the Christian population than in northern Italy, was certainly very great during the first half of the third century, for in 251 there was held at Rome under Pope Cornelius a synod of sixty bishops.³ As all the bishops summoned may not have attended the council, we can put the number a little higher for the territory of which Rome was the ecclesiastical centre. But we are not able to identify these sees. It is, however, probable that Ostia had its own bishop before the end of the era of persecutions: the account of Pope Marcellus (336-337) in the *Liber Pontificalis*, and St. Augustine⁴ both mention the privilege of the bishop of Ostia of consecrating the Roman bishop as an old one. Other suburbican sees such as Porto, Albano and Tibur may have a like antiquity. The creation of these various sees does not necessarily indicate a new effort of evangelisation in a region where Christianity had penetrated in the time of the Apostles, but it may indicate an increase in the density of the Christian population in the immediate surroundings of Rome. We may suppose that the same applied, more or less, to the rest of Italy. It seems certain in any case that Naples had its first bishop, St. Aspren, at the beginning of the third century at the latest, for his eighth successor, Fortunatus, flourished at the time of the Council of Sardica in 343, and it also seems probable that the church of the religious metropolis of the Campagna, Capua, whose first known bishop, Proterius, was functioning in 313, had not just then been founded.⁵

As for the number of the faithful in a great church like that of Rome, the very valuable information given in the letter of Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch⁶ mentioning "forty-six priests, seven deacons, seven subdeacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, lectors and porters, and more than fifteen hundred widows and

³ Mansi, I, 865-866.

⁴ *Breviculus collationis cum donatistis*, iii, 29.

⁵ Cf. F. Lanzoni, *Le origini delle diocesi antiche d'Italia*, 1st edn., pp. 128 *et seq.*, and 143 *et seq.*

⁶ In Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 11.

needy," enables us to put the whole number at some forty thousand souls towards the middle of the third century.

The evangelisation of the country districts was still backward

In Italy as elsewhere, at least in the West, and apart from exceptions, only the cities and their immediate surroundings were then affected by Christian preaching. The country districts, less accessible materially and morally—for the old superstitions died hard there—remained refractory or were not reached by it. In Gaul, for instance, an apostle of the countryside like St. Martin would find practically everything still to be done at the end of the fourth century. In the East it was not the same. The proportion of Christian inscriptions, the martyrological writings, the intensity of the sudden pagan reactions, and on the other hand the more normal participation by Christians in the life of cities between these explosions—these all combine to show that the East during the third century, as at the end of the second, was ahead of the West in the work of the Christianisation of the Roman world, though to an extent which varied according to the different regions.⁷

§ 8. THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY OUTSIDE THE ROMAN EMPIRES

It was also, as geography would suggest, beyond the eastern frontiers that Christian propaganda began to obtain very definite results beyond the Empire, whereas nothing like that is known in the case of the West.

Persia

For from the third century, if not, as is possible, already at the end of the second, the Gospel began to take a hold on Persia, where it had been little known previously.¹ A *Dialogue* of a disciple of Bardesanes of Edessa named Philip² implies that the Christian religion had penetrated as far as the eastern provinces of Persia³ about the year 220, and this would mean that its evangelisation

⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 764 *et seq.* and Bk. IV.

¹ Cf. Vol. II, pp. 368-370.

² Cf. *supra*, p. 644, n. 18.

³ Cf. Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, VI, x, 46.

must go back to the preceding century. Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria alludes in a letter in 250 to the Mesopotamian churches.⁴ Some Christian prisoners were taken from Syria by King Sapor after his great victory over the Emperor Valerian (260). They were interned in Mesopotamia and Persia, and must have helped in the evangelisation of the land of their exile. This evangelisation was certainly already fairly advanced, for ten years later we find Persian Christians disputing with the Manichaeans. Lastly, in the last quarter of the third century, the capital of the great Eastern kingdom, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, was an episcopal see, occupied by a well-known bishop, the Aramean Papa bar'Aggai, and the plan he conceived at the beginning of the fourth century of federating all the Persian Christians under the headship of the bishop of the royal cities shows that there were already several episcopal sees in the country. Again, we gather from the acts of the Synod of Dadiso, held in the following century, that Papa bar'Aggai had himself had predecessors at Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Hence when the persecution of the Persian church began, it already had a long history behind it.⁵

The extent of the first persecution of Persian Christians by King Sapor II at the time of the death of Constantine (from 338) is a confirmation of the fact that the preaching of Christianity had resulted in gains among the population of his kingdom which could only have been obtained after a lapse of time.

Georgia

Georgia must also have been evangelised in the end of the third century through the ports of the north-west coast of the Black Sea, for one of the ancient churches represented at the Council of Nicaea was that of Pityus,⁶ at the foot of the Caucasus range.

Armenia

The Christianisation of Armenia, most likely commenced at the beginning of the third century by Syrian missionaries from Edessa,

⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v.

⁵ On all this, cf. J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'Empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide*, pp. 1-43.

⁶ H. Gelzer, *Patrum Nicaenorum nomina*, Leipzig, 1898, p. lxxii. On the beginnings of Christianity in Georgia, and perhaps amongst the Scythians in the third century, see P. Peeters, *Les débuts du christianisme en Georgie d'après les sources hagiographiques*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, L (1932), pp. 5-58.

was the work of St. Gregory the Illuminator, son of the Parthian prince Anou or Anag, and said to have been born in 257. The conversion of the Armenian nation was already making good progress before the year 300, but its completion following the baptism of the King Tiridates and the royal family, probably between 290 and 310, and the organisation of the Armenian church belong to the ecclesiastical history of the fourth century.⁷

India

It is possible that the Christian message was also carried before the year 300 to a still farther land of Asia. According to Eusebius,⁸ the first master of the Catechical School of Alexandria, the Sicilian Pantaenus, was a missionary to "India" towards the end of the second century. It is said that he there found memories of a much earlier preaching by the apostle Bartholomew. We have seen above⁹ that little store is to be set on these vague "apostolic traditions," which have insufficient support. The mission of Pantaenus is, on the other hand, quite credible; but we have no other evidence for it than the statements quoted by Eusebius, who gives them for what they may be worth.

As to the land itself which Pantaenus may have evangelised, the name "India" at that time might signify the present Yemen in Arabia, or the kingdom of Axoum on the Abyssinian coast, quite as well as India properly so called. A bishop of the fourth century, the Arian Theophilus, who preached Christianity with a measure of success amongst the Himyarites or Sabaeans of southern Arabia

⁷ The Life of St. Gregory the Illuminator, full of legendary elements, is given in the *Acta sanctorum*, Vol. VIII (September), pp. 295-413. On the dates of the life of Gregory, cf. Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, 2nd edn., Vol. II, p. 171, and Fr. Tournèize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie*, pp. 121 *et seq.* The conversion of the mass of the Armenians seems later than 300, but before the end of the persecution of Diocletian. Sozomen (*Hist. eccles.*, II, viii) has only vague references to it: "I have learnt that the Armenians had been christianised a long time before." This means before the reign of Constantine, but the text does not say whether the evangelisation had only begun or was completed a long time before Constantine.

⁸ *Hist. eccles.*, V, x. St. Jerome (*Epist.*, lxx; *De viris illustribus*, xxxvi, 70) amplifies the succinct indications of Eusebius, and explains that Pantaenus had been sent to India by the bishop Demetrius of Alexandria, and that he preached to the Brahmins. But this seems quite conjectural.

⁹ Cf. Bk. I, p. 324.

was, according to Philostorgius,¹⁰ "Indian" by origin, and there were already some Christians in his native land, the island of Dibous. Does this mean Diu, Socrotra (Dioscorida), or a little island off the shore of Ethiopia? It is difficult to say, and hence also to decide whether it was only the coasts of the Red Sea or the approaches to India, or India itself, that was penetrated by the Christian faith before the middle of the third century.¹¹ *The Acts of Thomas*,¹² which make the Apostle go to India itself, are too clearly apocryphal to deserve the least credit. But a newly discovered text and a very valuable one may perhaps provide a solid argument in favour of an evangelisation of India going back at least to the third century. This is one of the fragments of Mani discovered in Egypt,¹³ in which the founder of Manichaeism speaks thus: ¹⁴ "At the end of the years of the king Ardaschir, I set forth to preach. I travelled in a vessel to the land of the Indians. I preached to them the hope of life, and I chose there a good following. In the year when King Ardaschir died and his son Schapur became king, I went in a vessel from the land of the Indians to the land of the Persians, and from the land of the Persians I came into the lands of Babylon, Maisan and Chuzistan. . . ."

That this refers to the beginning of India proper seems clear if we remember the close relations between Manichaeism and the Indian religion. That these declarations by Mani imply a previous evangelisation there seems equally likely, for Mani presents himself

¹⁰ The rare fragments hitherto known (some others have just been discovered) of the *Ecclesiastical History* of the Arian Philostorgius are published in Migne, P.G., Vol. LXV, p. 481, and, more recently, in the Berlin *Corpus*, by J. Bidez (Leipzig, 1913). Philostorgius was a one-sided historian, and he may have exaggerated the missionary work of his co-religionist Theophilus, but he certainly did not invent it.

¹¹ The bishop Frumentius preached the Gospel in Abyssinia at the beginning of the fourth century (Rufinus, *Hist. eccles.*, I, ix), and Theophilus himself was sometimes called "Blemmaeus," the name of an African people, by his opponents, and hence the Abyssinian hypothesis would seem to be indicated. But the word Διψοῦ is only the translation of a Hindu term *Dvipa*, meaning island, and it seems perhaps more natural to regard it as signifying a locality in the Indian Ocean rather than the Arabian Gulf.

¹² The apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* belong to the third century. Cf. Lipsius, *Die Apocryphen Apostelgeschichte und Apostellegenden*, Vol. I, Brunswick, 1883. Cf. Bk. IV.

¹³ Bk. IV.

¹⁴ At the beginning of the *Kephalaia* published by C. Schmidt, *Neue Originalquellen des Manichäismus*, Stuttgart, 1933.

in his preaching as an apostle of Jesus Christ, and he must have addressed Christians in the first place, and found amongst them his "good following," if that is really the meaning of the words thus translated. The Christian communities which Cosmas Indicopleustes found in Hindustan in the sixth century, and which were then connected with the church of Persia,¹⁵ of which they were colonies, and possibly those he visited in the island of Dioscorides, would thus go back to a period previous to the end of the persecutions in the Roman Empire.

First Evangelisation of the Goths

In Eastern Europe also, the first seeds of Christianity were sown among the floating populations beyond the frontier of the Empire from the middle of the third century. The most important of the Germanic peoples which occupied the parts to the north and north-east of the lower Danube was the Gothic race. The incursions of the Goths into Roman territory increased in number from the reign of Decius to that of Aurelian (250 to 270 roughly). It was doubtless then that they heard of Christianity for the first time. Commodian, who is thought to have written about that time, speaks in his *Carmen apologeticum*¹⁶ of Christians who, having been taken away into captivity by the Goths after the defeat and death of Decius (251), won the sympathies of their conquerors. This sympathy must have prepared the way for conversions. The Catholic historian Sozomen¹⁷ and the Arian Philostorgius¹⁸ at the beginning of the fifth century agree in attributing the same effects to the invasion of Asia Minor by the Goths a short time afterwards, under Valerian. From Galatia and Cappadocia, the invaders then brought back some Christians, including clergy, who successfully taught them the religion of Christ. One of these apostolic prisoners, Eutyches the Cappadocian, is praised by St. Basil of Caesarea in one of his letters for doing this.¹⁹ The celebrated Ulfila himself, often called the Apostle of the Goths because his labours brought the mass of

¹⁵ Migne, P.G., Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 88.

¹⁶ 810 *et seq.*

¹⁷ *Hist. eccles.*, II, vi.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, II, v. Philostorgius here calls the Goths "Scythians," but this need not deceive us.

¹⁹ *Ep.*, clix.

the Visigothic nation to Christianity in an Arian form in the fourth century, was a grandson of Cappadocian prisoners who in the preceding century had doubtless begun to labour for the conversion of their captors.²⁰ But the results of such efforts do not become visible to us until a hundred years later.

²⁰ Cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, p. 442.

THE GREAT PERSECUTIONS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE THIRD CENTURY, AND THE PERIOD OF RELIGIOUS PEACE FROM 260 TO 302¹

§ 1. THE DECIAN PERSECUTION

Renewal of Persecution in the Middle of the Third Century

THE marked success of Christian propaganda was bound to alarm a power which had always regarded the Christian religion as an enemy, or at least as a danger. Septimius Severus had tried to put a stop to conversions to the Christian faith, but the persecution which then ensued died down comparatively quickly. That of Maximin had been bloody, but brief. Gordian III had left the Church in peace; Philip the Arabian had belonged to it, or had been sufficiently sympathetic towards it to be taken for one of its members. But with Decius, who succeeded Philip in 249, a representative of the old Roman tradition mounted the throne. One of his chief aims was the restoration of the old ways: it was practically inevitable that he would deal rigorously with Christians.

With him, the persecution became truly general for the first

¹ Bibliography.—Same as the general bibliography for Ch. xvii. The sources for the two great persecutions under Decius and Valerian are indicated in note 2 below and p. 801, n. 5.

Works dealing with these persecutions, and the history of the period of peace of the Church in the second half of the third century, and some sources for details are indicated in the notes to this chapter.

See also: P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. II: *Saint Cyprien et son temps*, Paris, 1902; Wickert, article *Licinius*, no. 173 (Valerian), and no. 84 (Gallienus) in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, Vol. XIII, 1926, col. 488-495 and 350-369; L. Homo, *L'empereur Gallien et la crise de l'Empire romain au III^e siècle*, in *Revue historique*, Vol. LXIII, 1913, pp. 1-22 and 225-267; *De Claudio Gothico, Romanorum imperatore*, Paris, 1903; and *Essai sur le règne de l'Empereur Aurélien*, Paris, 1904 (fasc. 89 of the *Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome*); P. Damerou, *Kaiser Claudius II Gothicus*, Leipzig, 1934; Groag, article *Domitius*, no. 36 (Aurelian) in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, Vol. V, 1903, col. 1347-1419.

time, and aimed openly at the extermination of Christianity. A duel ensued between the Church and the Roman Empire.

The Edict of Decius

The text of the persecuting edict has not come down to us, but its application enables us to determine its nature with sufficient exactness.² It compelled not only every Christian, but every person suspected of Christianity, and perhaps in principle all the inhabitants of the Empire,³ to make an act of adhesion to pagan worship, such as participation in a sacred meal, libation or sacrifice even reduced to its simplest expression, such as offering a few grains of incense to the statue of the Emperor, indicating acknowledgment of the imperial divinity which summed up the official religion of Rome. Thereby the suspect would show that there was no real foundation for the suspicion which had been attached to him, and a Christian abjuring his faith would be straightway absolved, by virtue of the Trajan legislation, from the crime which ceased with his disavowal. As in the past, what was desired was less to punish the crime than to make it cease. But to arrive at this result all the means left to the discretion of the judges were lawful—torture, long imprisonment, attempts at seduction: all that was required was that they should succeed. Hence these words of Origen: "The judges are upset if torments are supported with courage. but their joy is boundless when they are able to triumph over a Christian."⁴ In other words, the order of the day was to make, not martyrs, but apostates.⁵

² We have abundant information concerning the persecution of Decius. Our sources are. (1) letters (amongst others, *Epist.*, viii, xxv, xxxiv, li, lvii) and the treatise *De lapsis* of St. Cyprian; (2) letters of Dionysius of Alexandria to Fabius of Antioch (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli-xlii), to Domitian and Didymus (*ibid.*, VII, xi, 20), to Germanus (*ibid.*, VI, xli); (3) *Passions* of martyrs; but only those of Pionius (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 120; Knopf, *Ausgewählte Martyreracten*, 2nd edn., p. 56), and apparently of Carpus (cf. *infra*, p. 796, n. 24) can be used with complete confidence; (4) some forty Egyptian papyri containing certificates of sacrifice delivered by the Roman authorities to apostates: the names, followed by a study of their content, will be found in A. Bludau, *Die Aegyptischen Libelli und die Christenverfolgung des Kaisers Decius* (27 *Supplementheft* of the *Römische Quartalschrift*, 1931).

³ In Egypt, a priestess of the god Petesuchos was put to the test. Cf. Bludau, *op. cit.*, p. 3, no. 3. But this priestess may have been the subject of suspicion.

⁴ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, viii.

⁵ *De lapsis*, vii-ix. Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli.

The Great Number of Apostasies

Many were in fact made. Numerous Christians, softened by a long period of peace, could not bear the idea of torture, and also it may perhaps have seemed to more than one of them that torments could be escaped almost without renunciation, by agreeing sometimes to a simple action which would indeed have the value of a disavowal to the representative of authority, but was not a formal abjuration. In short, as St. Cyprian testifies, there were apostates without number, but of several kinds. Some, who were called *sacrificati*, agreed really to offer sacrifices to the gods; others, *thurificati*, merely burnt incense before the divine images, and chiefly that of the Emperor; others again had their names inscribed in the public registers as having satisfied the law, or else obtained, usually for money, certificates (*libelli*) attesting that they had obeyed the imperial orders: these were the *acta facientes* or *libellatici*.

Martyrs at Rome

Besides the weak, there were some intrepid confessors of the faith who paid for their fidelity to Christ with their lives, often after cruel torments. One of the first of these, if not the first of all, was the bishop of Rome himself, Fabian, who suffered martyrdom four months after the accession of Decius, on January 20th, 250.⁶ Several members of the Roman clergy and a great number of layfolk of both sexes were imprisoned. One of them, the African Celerinus, was, after weeks in chains, set free by a sudden indulgence of the emperor.⁷ Others died in irons, such as the priest Moises;⁸ others again, such as Calocerius and Parthenius, whom the *Hieronymian Martyrology* attach to the Imperial household,⁹ shed their blood in the summer of 250. The martyrologists also put under Decius the death at Rome of two Easterns, Abdon and Sennen.¹⁰

⁶ *Liberian Catalogue*, in *Liber pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 4. St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, iii.

⁷ St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, xxiv.

⁸ St. Cyprian, *Ibid.*, lv; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 20.

⁹ May 19th.

¹⁰ *Mart. Hier.*, August 1st. Cf. Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 693. Their Acts are without historical value. But we can accept the designation of Easterns, if not Persians, given to them, for the cemetery of Pontian, where they were buried, was in the middle of the Eastern quarter. Cf. Dufourcq, *Etude sur les Gesta martyrum romains*, Vol. I, p. 239.

Several victims of the persecutions in Italy are attributed to the reign of Decius by various *Passions*, such as that of St. Agatha at Catania,¹¹ but these are not sufficiently certain to justify acceptance of the narratives. But at least it is certain that Christianity was already, in the middle of the third century, too widespread in Italy for the imperial orders to lead to victims only in Rome.

The Persecution in Gaul and Spain

Of the application of these orders in Gaul we know nothing, for if St. Saturninus of Toulouse indeed suffered martyrdom under Decius,¹² he is represented in his *Acts* as having perished in a rising of the populace,¹³ while St. Denis of Paris may not have been put to death till the reign of Valerian.¹⁴

Similarly, we do not know who were the martyrs of Spain, but this does not mean that there were none. The Church of that country had to suffer shame from two bishops, Basilides of Legio (Leon) and Asturica Augusta (Astorga), and Martial of Emerita (Merida), the first of whom purchased from the magistrates a certificate of sacrifice, while the second agreed to sign a declaration of apostasy.¹⁵ The indignation caused by their conduct is the best proof that the Spanish Christians did not all cut so poor a figure as did these two bishops.

In Africa

Africa produced a number of failures of varying gravity, from the ranks of the simple faithful up to that of the episcopate. The great bishop of Carthage at that time, St. Cyprian, in his intelligent charity, insisted on distinguishing between the veritable apostates, who really deserved the name of *lapsi* or fallen ones, and the simple *libellatici*. St. Cyprian, who was to give his life in a subsequent persecution but who, in presence of the spectacle of indecision and pusillanimity presented by a part of his flock, thought it necessary to continue to direct it, sought for himself a retreat from which he could exercise this direction in comparative safety. But there were also numbers of the faithful who were thrown into prison, where

¹¹ *Acta Sanctorum, Februarii*, Vol. I, p. 621.

¹² Cf. above, p. 776.

¹³ In Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 110.

¹⁴ Cf. above, p. 776.

¹⁵ St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxvii.

many died of hunger, and others again who were put to the torture, to which some succumbed, such as Paul, Fortunio, Bassus, Mapalicus and their companions.¹⁶

In Egypt

In Egypt also there were many apostates and *libellatici*. People in position and of means were the most inclined to sacrifice.¹⁷ But there were sufficient martyrs to uphold the honour of the Church: scaffolds were erected in Alexandria for the intrepid confessors; women, after long and cruel torments, were beheaded; soldiers whose Christianity was revealed when other Christians were being executed were likewise put to death.¹⁸ In towns and villages, the test of sacrifice was imposed upon all, and led to many sentences of death, as well as to many apostasies.¹⁹ True, the Egyptian peasants, not too well disposed towards the representatives of the Roman authority, sometimes took a real pleasure in withholding fugitives from the pursuits of justice. This we see well from the case of the bishop of Alexandria, Dionysius: imitating the conduct of Cyprian at Carthage, he hid himself, was then captured, but set free in spite of himself by a group of peasants. He was able subsequently to return to his episcopal city and there to relate in celebrated letters the chief events in the Egyptian persecution. Another noted Christian never returned home, if at least we may trust the edifying life written by St. Jerome: Paul, a rich and cultivated inhabitant of the Thebaid, took refuge in the mountains, where he lived in a cave near to a spring; there he took so great a delight in the solitary and meditative life that, having left his home when he was 23, he was still there in his cave when he died at the age of 113: he was the first Christian hermit, and the founder of monachism.²⁰

¹⁶ St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, viii and xxi.

¹⁷ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli.

¹⁸ Cf. the study of Bludau mentioned above, p. 792, n. 2.

¹⁹ Letters to Germanus and to Fabius of Antioch quoted in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xl-xlii.

²⁰ Cf. St. Jerome, *Vita Pauli*. The historicity of this life is a much-discussed question. No other testimony corroborates the existence of Paul of Thebes. But the famous St. Anthony was not the first solitary in Egypt; there were ascetics before him in the desert, and he himself learnt in the school of one of these. The existence of Paul is therefore quite probable. Jerome probably says of him more than was really known, but doubtless he did not wholly invent his *Life*. It is a somewhat fictional and suspected story, but not a pure romance. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *Vie de Paul de Thèbes et Vie d'Hilarion*, Paris.

In Asia

There were also martyrs in Epirus,²¹ Greece, and Crete, where perhaps was condemned amongst others the bishop of Gortyna, Cyril,²² and again in other hellenic islands. But one of the most celebrated victims of the Decian persecution belonged to Asiatic Greece; Pionius, a priest of the church of Smyrna, whose bishop, Eudaemon, unworthy successor of Polycarp, had offered sacrifice. It is to be noted that, according to the *Passion* of Pionius, the Jews seem to have been then, at Smyrna if not elsewhere, particularly busy against the Christians. The *Passion* does not say that they were the cause of the arrest of Pionius. But the pagans adopted a less malevolent attitude: they would have preferred to conquer the resistance of Pionius and save him. He was imprisoned, brought before the magistrate, and we might almost say entreated at length but vainly by the crowd, by the municipal magistrate, and finally by the proconsul Julius Proculus Quintilianus, to offer sacrifice like his bishop, and was finally delivered to the flames.²³

Other cities of the province of Asia, Ephesus, Lampsacus and Pergamus, where Carpus the bishop suffered,²⁴ produced heroic victims; similarly the provinces of Bithynia, Pontus, Cappadocia and Roman Armenia (Armenia Minor), made famous by the name of Polyeuctes, whose martyrdom, however, is not among those

²¹ The martyr Terinus suffered at Buthroton under Decius, according to the Panegyric of St. Arsenius, ed. Lambros, *Κερκυραϊκά ἀνέκδοτα* (Athens, 1882, pp. 11-12, 20-22. Cf. Ugolini, *Il cristianesimo e l'organizzazione ecclesiastica a Burinto (Albania)* in *Orientalia cristiana periodica*, II (1936), pp. 309-319.

²² His *Acts* (Surius, *Vitas Sanctorum*, July 9th), which are far from inspiring perfect confidence, put his martyrdom under Decius, but the Greek hagiographical collection of *Menaea* (July 9th) put it under Diocletian. Finally, the *Hieronymian Martyrology* makes him a martyr of Egypt, and not of Crete.

²³ The *Acts* of Pionius (cf. above, p. 792, n. 2) are not an immediate account of the facts: they seem to be a literary embellishment, but not a legendary deformation, of a more sober Greek original. Eusebius has summarised them (*Hist. eccles.*, IV, xv). He links them with those of Polycarp, as though the two martyrs were contemporaries; the error in this chronological linking is explained by the identity of place. Although the *Acts* give no date, their contents show that they belong to the persecution of Decius, and the *Chronicle of Alexandria* confirms this.

²⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xv, 48. *Acta*, with no indication of date, published by Aubé, *L'Eglise et l'Etat dans la seconde moitié du III^e siècle*, pp. 499-506. Cf. Harnack, *Die Akten des Carpus, des Papyrus und Agathonikè*, in *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, Vol. III, 3, 4, Leipzig, 1888, pp. 440 et seq., and Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 266, n. 1, and 368, n. 1.

recommended by the Church, for he voluntarily provoked it by tearing up the persecuting imperial edict posted up in Melitene.²⁵

Several bishops of great cities in the Asiatic provinces were put to death or perished in prison. Among the latter was Alexander of Jerusalem, who had in 212 succeeded the centenarian bishop Narcissus, having previously been his coadjutor. He had founded in his episcopal city a celebrated library and, together with the bishop of the provincial metropolis, Caesarea, the Catechetical School in that city, in which Origen taught after leaving Alexandria.²⁶ The bishop of Antioch in Syria, St. Babylas, who is said to have given a penance to the emperor Philip,²⁷ confessed the Faith, either by the bloody martyrdom mentioned by St. John Chrysostom,²⁸ or by the lengthy trial of imprisonment, as was said a hundred years earlier by Eusebius, who was probably better informed.²⁹ Nestor, bishop of Magydos in Pamphylia, was courteously interrogated by the eirenarch in the presence of the city council, and then taken to the legate, who had him tortured and crucified.³⁰ On the other hand, Acacius³¹ who, according to *Acts* which are lacking in historical precision, was apparently bishop of Antioch in Pisidia, unless he was a *chorepiscopus*, i.e. a country auxiliary of the bishop of Antioch in Syria,³² was finally released by the emperor, to whom the legate, nonplussed by his calm firmness, had transmitted the report of the interrogation.

As Decius aimed at obtaining the apostasy of Christians rather than their death, it is not surprising that a teacher of the authority of Origen was arrested at Caesarea, where he was then teaching, and imprisoned, and that all efforts were made to obtain his defection. He was several times put to the torture, but remained firm.³³

²⁵ On the case of Polyeuctus, cf. E. Le Blant, *Polyeucte et le zèle téméraire*, in *Memoirs of the Académie des Inscriptions*, Vol. XXVIII, 1876, 2nd part, pp. 335-352. The *Acts* of Polyeuctus, in the form of a fourth-century homily, were found and published by B. Aubé, *Polyeucte dans l'Histoire, Etude sur le martyre de Polyeucte, d'après des documents inédits*, Paris, 1882.

²⁶ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxix and xl.

²⁷ Cf. *supra*, p. 761.

²⁸ *De sancto Babyla*.

²⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxix, 4.

³⁰ *Acta SS., Februarii*, Vol. III, p. 629.

³¹ In Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, pp. 1304 *et seq.*

³² Such is at least the hypothesis formulated by Hamack (*Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, 2nd edn., p. 183, n. 1).

³³ Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 10, and xxxix, 5), from whom we derive these details concerning the imprisonment and torture of Origen, says, in the

His imprisonment ceased towards the end of 251 after the death of Decius, but he cannot long have survived the sufferings he had endured.

Diminution and End of the Persecution

By that time the majority of the prisoners were already set free. The persecution slowed down after the end of 250. The following Spring tranquillity seemed to return; the fugitives reappeared and the bishops openly took over once more the governing of their churches, which began to reassemble. Decius himself perished at the end of the summer. Security was then complete: St. Cyprian was able to call a Council at Carthage.³⁴ The church of Rome, which had remained without a bishop since the martyrdom of Fabian, was able after fifteen months to appoint his successor, Cornelius.³⁵

Renewal under Gallus

But it was only a calm. The successor to Decius, Trebonianus Gallus, renewed the persecution,³⁶ but for motives which were very different from those of his predecessor. Decius had tried to destroy Christianity for reasons of State; Gallus yielded to a sudden outburst of popular hostility on the occasion of a terrible plague which began to ravage the Empire at the end of 251. The new Pope Cornelius was arrested. But courage was now greater: the faithful went in a body to the tribunal where their bishop was to be judged, and proclaimed their own faith. Did this manifestation impress Authority, which could already see that the immense effort made by Decius had not succeeded? At any rate, Cornelius was only exiled, and to a place only a few leagues from Rome, Centumcellae (Civita Vecchia). He died there in 253. His successor, Lucius, was also

first of these passages, that Origen was surnamed ἀδαμάντιος, which could be translated as "man of steel." But he does not establish a link between his intrepid resistance to torture and this name.

³⁴ St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lii.

³⁵ Cf. Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, p. cclx.

³⁶ Cf. St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lix, 6, and Dionysius of Alexandria, *Epistola ad Hermammōn* (in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, x), which are the two sources concerning this renewal of hostilities, on which we have little information as to details.

removed from Rome immediately after his election, but recalled the following year. Gallus had then been ousted by Aemilianus, who was in turn replaced by P. Licinius Valerianus (Valerian), who at first showed himself decidedly favourable to the Christians.

Failure of the Persecution

In fine, the first great general and methodical attempt, and one which at first seemed implacable, to destroy Christianity by a law compelling all Christians to make an act of official adhesion to the pagan religion, had failed. Long lines of Christians without courage had presented themselves before the magistrates to offer sacrifice, and many had obtained, without really offering, certificates which seemed to make them apostates; but they were apostates only in appearance, and not internally. And how many had been able to evade the searches of the police, or had not even fallen under suspicion? The practical result of the persecution was almost nil; it is possible even that the Church was in the end strengthened, for the martyrs had been sufficiently numerous for their example to be an efficacious stimulus: this became evident when Gallus renewed the fight. There is something more: already under Decius, a sentiment of pity or of dislike for the shedding of blood displayed itself in the pagan public³⁷—a sentiment doubtless subject to changes. Nevertheless, public opinion began to be modified.

Religious Difficulties Resulting from the Persecution. The Question of the Lapsed

The Decian persecution, however, left behind it a heavy burden of internal difficulties for the Church. The repentant *lapsi* asked to be reinstated in the ranks of the faithful even before the end of the persecution, and in Africa many confessors, relying on the authority which their heroism had given them in the eyes of the Church, did not hesitate to give the repentant ones letters of remission, *libelli pacis*, which dispensed them from penance. This unexpected alliance of confessors and apostates, and the excessive

³⁷ For instance, the torture of St. Carpus and his companions at Pergamum led to murmurs, if not to open protests. For various texts of the Acts of Martyrs giving like indications, and discussions, especially chronological, to which they have led, see P. Allard, *Histoire des persécutions pendant la première moitié du IIIe siècle*, 3rd edn., Paris, 1905, pp. 426 *et seq.*

indulgence of the former, was bound to meet with resistance from ecclesiastical authority, and St. Cyprian protested with firmness as well as with gentleness. But he could not prevent a schism, the chief instigator of which was the priest Novatus, with Fortunatus as the bishop of the dissidents. The sect, however, took the name of the deacon Felicissimus, who had been one of the leaders of the movement from its beginning. The schism did not last long, as we shall see later on.³⁸

The same cannot be said of the schism which, for reasons the opposite of those which prevailed in Africa, resulted from the Decian persecution at Rome, and which affected a great part of the Church.³⁹ When, many months after the death of Pope Fabian, it became possible to appoint a new occupant for the chair of Peter, Cornelius was not elected without opposition, and a party of rigorists set up against him a priest who was prominent among the Roman clergy and a distinguished writer and eloquent orator, Novatian. Cornelius promised pardon to repentant *lapsi*; Novatian, an extremist for severity as Novatus was at Carthage for indulgence, refused to pardon any. He gathered many people around him, and then, outside Rome, numerous disciples flocked to this church of the holy and the pure, *Καθαροί* as they were called in the East, where the movement developed greatly. This schismatic church was to continue down to the seventh century, and from time to time a fairly large number of Montanists helped to swell its ranks.

§ 2. THE PERSECUTION UNDER VALERIAN

Valerian at First Well Disposed towards Christians

The first years which followed the persecution under Gallus were years of complete peace for the Church. Though the new emperor had been one of Decius's lieutenants,¹ he did not necessarily share his ideas. He had seen the failure of Decius's measures

³⁸ Cf. *infra*, p. 851 *et seq.*

³⁹ Cf. *infra*, p. 852 *et seq.*

¹ The *Historia Augusta* says that Decius had given Valerian the title of censor, with extraordinary powers, making him a sort of vice-emperor, which would indicate a similarity of views. But the isolated testimony of the *Historia Augusta*, the mediocre value of which is known, may well be a fantasy contrary to historic fact.

against Christianity, and had been able to profit thereby. From 254 to 257 Christians had cause only to be thankful for their new sovereign. Several of them held offices in the palace, which was even compared to "a church of God."² The Christian sympathies of Salonina, wife of Gallienus heir to the Empire, may in part explain the undeniably favourable attitude of Valerian towards the Church.³

Renewal of Hostilities, and its Causes

But the evil days were not long in returning. Evil days for the Empire: assaults by barbarians, Franks, Allemanni and other Germans, on the frontiers of the Rhine and the Danube, incursions of increasing boldness of Goths on the shores of the Black Sea and even as far as the Aegean, a rising of the Berbers in Africa, and the invasion of Mesopotamia by the Persians under King Sapor, who penetrated as far as Antioch.⁴ The ground was thus well prepared for any fanatics who would once more stir up the minds of the people against those who had always been denounced as a public danger, even though at certain times the authorities, and public opinion, had seemed to appreciate the value of their virtues. One of the emperor's counsellors, Macrienus, an enthusiastic disciple of oriental cults which were bitter rivals of Christianity, seems to have been the instigator of a new outburst of hostility. Possibly the great riches thought to be possessed by the Church, which certainly gave away much in alms and already possessed important properties, likewise aroused envy in a period when the Empire was itself passing through a severe economic crisis. In short, the war against the Church was renewed, and though the methods differed from those employed by Decius, it was equally implacable.⁵

² St. Dionysius of Alexandria, *Epistola ad Hermammon*, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, x, 3.

³ Medals of the Empress Salonina, with the inscription "Augusta in pace," have led some to think that she was completely converted to Christianity. The inference is legitimate, but it is not certain. Possibly she merely professed a more or less Christianised Syncretism.

⁴ The taking of Antioch in the reign of Valerian is questioned: cf. Tillemont, *Histoire des Empereurs: L'Empereur Valérien*, note X. In any case there is no doubt as to the seriousness of the Persian invasion of the East.

⁵ On the Valerian persecuton, we have (1) the letters of St. Dionysius of Alexandria to Hermammon (in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, x) and Germanus (*ibid.*, VII, xi); (2) St. Cyprian, *Epistolae*, lxxvi-lxxix; (3) a relatively large number of *Passions* of historic value, such as those of St. Cyprian, SS. Marian

First Persecuting Edict

The attack, however, proceeded by stages, possibly because the emperor and his advisers began by hoping that moderate measures would have some effect, and also thought that if they struck first at the heads the life of the whole Christian body would be affected. Hence a first edict was issued in August 257, which concerned immediately only the higher clergy, from bishops to deacons, who were commanded to sacrifice to the gods of the Empire, the celebration of Christian worship and visits to the cemeteries being forbidden. The emperor however claimed that he was not preventing the disciples of Christ from honouring their God in private. This is very plain evidence of the influence of the syncretistic conception of religion upon the counsels of the Empire: the Christian God will occupy a place among the numerous divinities which the emperor's subjects are free to worship in private, but the profession of any such private religion must be accompanied by the practice of the official rites. Disobedience to the command of sacrifice meant exile, and infringement of the prohibitions involved the punishment of death.

We know how the edict was applied in two of the biggest episcopal sees in the Empire, Alexandria and Carthage. St. Dionysius and St. Cyprian appeared respectively before the competent magistrates, and on their refusal to obey were interned in places assigned to them. Almost at the same time, other African bishops, priests, deacons, and even ordinary layfolk were condemned by the legate of Numidia to forced labour in the mines, which was juridically a capital penalty: they had evidently infringed the order forbidding Christian assemblies.

Second Edict

Very soon the imperial government decided that these first measures were ineffective, or at least not sufficiently strong. A second edict in 258 laid it down that the higher clergy who had not obeyed should be executed without delay; laymen of high rank were to be deprived of their dignities and to have their possessions confiscated, and if this punishment did not make them repent, they

and James, the martyrs of the *Massa Candida* in Africa, and St. Fructuosus in Spain; (4.) the *Life* of St. Cyprian by his deacon Pontius; (5.) Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xii.

were to suffer capital punishment; their wives also would lose their possessions and be banished. Lastly, the numerous personnel in the imperial household, i.e. not only the palace servants, but also employés in the large Crown properties scattered throughout the Empire, were also to suffer confiscation, and then to be chained and condemned to forced labour in the agricultural or mining works of the Emperor.

Martyrs at Rome

The application of this edict was immediate and extremely rigorous. From the beginning of August, the already considerable wealth of the Roman Church had tempted the imperial treasury and led to the deaths of Pope Sixtus II and his deacons, among them being St. Laurence, who, according to a *Passion* which unfortunately has little historical value, was burnt on a gridiron over a slow fire for refusing to deliver up the treasures of the Church,⁶ and who has always received a special veneration from Christians.

It was also at that time that, as access to the cemeteries was forbidden and Christian assemblies there rendered impossible, the bodies of Saints Peter and Paul were doubtless removed secretly from the cemeteries in the Via Cornelia in the Vatican and the Ostian Way, and deposited *ad Catacumbas*, where the piety of the faithful was still able to give them discreet honour.⁷ Some Chris-

⁶ The earliest document we have on the *Passion* of St. Laurence is a passage in the *De officiis* of St. Ambrose (I, 41), obviously inspired by a *Passion* already in circulation in his time but possibly written half a century after the events. Père H. Delehay (Recherches sur le Légendier romain, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. LI, 1933, pp. 34-98) has shown its legendary character. The fact that the tradition of the torture of St. Laurence by fire is also found in Damasian inscriptions (*Damasi Epigrammata*, ed. Ihm, Leipzig, 1895, p. 37) and the iconographic diffusion of the gridiron symbol (medals, jewels, and the mosaic in the mausoleum of Galla Placidia at Ravenna, on which see articles Gril and Laurent (St.) in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne*, and J. Zeiller, *Sur une mosaïque du mausolée de Galla Placidia à Ravenne*, in *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, 1934, pp. 43 et seq.), might suggest a more favourable judgment. But the edict of Valerian certainly seems to have condemned only to death, without slow torture. Perhaps the legend concerning St. Laurence was formed, at least in part, under the influence of accounts of the Spanish deacon Vincent, who was extended on a red-hot bed, as the martyr Attalus of Lyons had been placed in a red-hot chair. On this comparison with Vincent, see Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri, *San Lorenzo e il supplicia della graticula*, in *Romische Quartalschrift*, Vol. XIV, 1900, pp. 159 et seq.

⁷ Cf. above, Bk. I, pp. 290-293.

tians who had ignored the prohibition were buried alive in the underground places where they had been praying.⁸

In Africa

The African Church was decimated. Cyprian of Carthage was dragged from his hiding place and brought before the proconsul Galerius Maximus. The account of his appearance has been preserved.⁹ It was quite brief:

"The most holy emperors have ordained that you are to offer sacrifice."

"I will not do it."

"Take care."

"Do what you have been commanded to do. In so clear a matter there is no need to deliberate."

The magistrate pronounced sentence: "We ordain that Thascius Cyprianus is to be put to death by the sword." "Thanks be to God," replied Cyprian. He went to his death in presence of a crowd of pagans, whose respectful silence contrasted with the anti-Christian shouts which had been heard in other times, and in the midst of his whole flock who placed around him cloths to receive his blood. In the evening his body was taken to a private burial place, while hymns were sung. Rarely had it been more evident what could be the love of an entire Christian community for its head who was at the same time its father.

Other bishops, at first exiled, were recalled in order to be put to death. The deacon James and the lector Marienus, arrested near Cirta,¹⁰ were beheaded at Lambessa, the seat of the legate of Numidia, with a number of layfolk, condemned doubtless for unlawful assemblies. Their *Passion*,¹¹ recorded by one of their companions, and one of the best still extant among so many similar documents which have disappeared in the course of time or through

⁸ St. Gregory of Tours, *De gloria martyrum*, I, 38.

⁹ *Acta proconsularia sancti Cypriani* (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, pp. 217 et seq.; Knopf, *Ausgewählte Martyrerakten*, pp. 71 et seq.).

¹⁰ Here a celebrated inscription known as that of the *Martyres Hortenses*, still partially obscure, has kept their memory graven in stone (*Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*, VIII, 7324).

¹¹ Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, pp. 226 et seq. Critical edn. by Franchi de' Cavalieri, Rome, 1900.

later troubles, says that the condemned were so numerous that the executions lasted several days.

At Utica there perished a compact group of martyrs known as the *Massa candida*.¹² They had at their head the bishop Quadratus, as we learn from a sermon of St. Augustine recently discovered.¹³ Very many others died in various places, among them being the clerics Montanus and Lucius, with their companions, including two catechumens, in the proconsular Province.¹⁴

In Spain and Gaul

Spain had amongst many others a glorious martyr in the person of Bishop Fructuosus of Tarragona, who was burnt alive with his deacons Augurus and Eulogus.¹⁵ The victims in Gaul are little known; we can attribute to the Valerian persecution with sufficient probability only the martyrdom of Patroclus, beheaded at Troyes in January 259,¹⁶ and that of Denis of Paris, the date of which remains uncertain, as we have said.¹⁷ On the other hand, it is possible that some Christians of Auvergne may have perished in the reign of Valerian, through bands of Alemannic barbarians who under a leader named Chrocus then ravaged the country, according to St. Gregory of Tours.¹⁸

¹² "*Massa*, because of their great number, *Candida* because of the brilliance of their victory," says St. Augustine (*Sermo cccvi*). But the name might also have been given because their bodies were interred in quicklime, as seems to be suggested by the account, probably legendary, given by Prudentius, *Peristephanon*, XIII, 76-87, according to which these martyrs were compelled to throw themselves into a ditch of quicklime.

¹³ Dom G. Morin, *La Massa Candida et le martyr Quadratus d'après deux sermons inédits de saint Augustin*, in *Atti della Pontificia Accademia di Archeologia*, series III, Rendiconti, Vol. III, ann. 1924-1925, Rome, 1925, pp. 289-313.

¹⁴ Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 233. Critical edition by Franchi de' Cavalieri, Rome, 1898.

¹⁵ Ruinart, *ibid.*, p. 220, reproduced in a poetical form in the *Peristephanon* of Prudentius, VI (fifth century). Cf. also St. Augustine, *Sermo cccxiii*, 2, and *Sermo cclxxii*, 3.

¹⁶ *Acta sanctorum, Januarii*, Vol. II, p. 342.

¹⁷ Cf. above, p. 794.

¹⁸ *Historia francorum*, I, xxxii-xxxiv, ed. K. Arndt, in *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum merovingicarum*, Vol. I, Hanover, 1885, p. 49. The controverted question of the "martyrs of Chrocus" has been treated by the Abbé G. Bardy (*Recherches sur un cycle hagiographique, Les martyrs de Chrocus*, in *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France*, Vol. XXI, 1935, pp. 5 et seq.). He concludes that Gregory of Tours, well informed on Auvergne, his own country, can be followed when he puts the invasion of Chrocus and the victims it caused among the Christians, in the reign of Valerian. But it is more difficult to accept

In the East

The East, whither Valerian went to direct personally his campaign against Persia, could not escape. In Palestine, Christians in the country parts were able to hide themselves, but the executions were very numerous.¹⁹ The names of Paregorius and of the ascetic Leo²⁰ have survived of the martyrs of Lycia, and among those of Cappadocia, the name of Cyril, when still a child.²¹

Close of the reign of Valerian and End of the persecution. The peaceful edict of Gallienus

The Persian catastrophe put an end to the persecution. In 259 Valerian made for Edessa, besieged by the Persians. Pestilence weakened his army; defeat ensued, and Valerian thought it necessary to try to come to terms. King Sapor profited by an interview to make him prisoner. Macrienus was able to continue for a little while the rigours Valerian had instigated. But Gallienus, son and successor to the late emperor, professed quite different sentiments, and these soon manifested themselves. He published an edict, the text of which we do not possess, ordering a cessation of the proceedings; then, doubtless at the request of bishops who thought him sufficiently well disposed to justify their asking for the restitution of the confiscated churches and cemeteries, he granted this in rescripts which confirmed to them the free exercise of their office as heads of churches.²²

§ 3. THE RELIGIOUS PEACE AND PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH FROM GALLIENUS TO DIOCLETIAN

Toleration under Gallienus

The edict and rescripts of Gallienus constituted the first official declaration of toleration in respect of Christianity published by the

that we must include among these victims a bishop of Mende, St. Privatus. The establishment of a bishop at Mende is certainly much later. Cf. above, pp. 774-778.

¹⁹ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xii.

²⁰ Acts of SS. Leo and Paregorius (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 610).

²¹ Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 253.

²² Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xiii.

imperial authority. The rescript addressed to the bishops Dionysius, Pinna and Demetrius says: "I have decided to spread abroad throughout the whole world the benefit of my generosity, so that places of worship may be evacuated and you may in consequence enjoy what is laid down in my rescript without interference by anyone."¹ On this day the Church entered a period of real peace, and one which was no longer precarious in character like the preceding periods, although liberty of conscience and of worship, to use modern terminology, were not as yet the subject of a declaration of principle. This was not to come till half a century later.

The peace lasted some forty years, disturbed perhaps here and there by isolated incidents which were always possible, and threatened sometimes by an offensive return of imperial hostility, while at other times the attitude of authority became even one of open benevolence.

Acts of Isolated Hostility under Gallienus

Immediately after the proclamation of toleration by Gallienus there were still some rigorous measures, for Macrienus, who continued in the East and had proclaimed his sons emperors there, had not disarmed. Thus, Caesarea in Palestine witnessed the martyrdom of the *optio* Marinus, a subaltern due to be promoted centurion.²

Doubtful Acts under Claudius the Goth

Fairly numerous *Acts* which are, however, of doubtful value, would lead us to think that Christian blood was shed in Rome and in Italy under Claudius the Goth. Popular fanaticism, reappearing at intervals, and the animosity of the Senate or of magistrates who could always find in the ancient laws texts which would justify rigorous measures, would suffice to explain these executions, and there is no need to suppose that there was a new edict expressly abrogating that of Gallienus. But in any case the texts reporting these incidents are too weakly supported to require full acceptance.

Aurelian dies before signing an Edict of Persecution

On the other hand, the emperor Aurelian (270-275), who endeavoured to fuse all the cults of the Empire into a solar monothe-

¹ *Ibid.*

² Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xv.

ism derived from the East and proclaimed to be the State religion, was logically bound to proceed to persecute Christians. Nevertheless he at first allowed the legislative arrangements of Gallienus to remain in force, and it was in conformity with this legal recognition of Christianity in the Empire that one day he took a decision showing plainly what were at that time the relations between the Church and the Roman State. The Bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, had, as we narrate elsewhere,³ been deposed for heresy by a Council, and a conflict broke out between him and his successor concerning the possession of the episcopal church. The parties appealed to the judgment of the emperor himself, who was then staying at Antioch, and who ordained that the church should be handed over to the bishop recognised by the bishop of Rome and his colleagues in Italy (272).⁴ Persecuting edicts were, however, prepared two years later, when the work of religious reorganisation planned by Aurelian was concluded: willingly or unwillingly, the Christian religion was to enter into the scheme or disappear. But before the edicts were signed, Aurelian perished in Thrace, a victim of a conspiracy organised by one of his freedmen (275).⁵

The Peace under the Successors of Aurelian and the Emperors of the Tetrarchy

The Peace, endangered for a moment, but thus preserved, continued under the immediate successors of Aurelian, and then under Diocletian and his colleagues of the Imperial Tetrarchy, the Augustus Maximian Hercules and the Caesars Constantius Chlorus and Galerius, for a quarter of a century. Under Diocletian, toleration even changed into favour, for steps were taken to help Christians to reconcile their conscientious obligations with participation in public affairs. Eusebius is careful to point out⁶ that in this period, in which the Church enjoyed a peace more complete than she had ever known before, Christians had been able to become governors of provinces and act as high magistrates, and that to this

³ Cf. Bk. IV.

⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx.

⁵ *Historia Augusta: Vita Aureliani*, xxxv-xxxvi and xli. Incidents of local persecution may have taken place here and there. Cf. above, p. 771, for Illyricum, and p. 772, n. 6 for Gaul.

⁶ *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, i, 2.

and they had been dispensed from offering sacrifices. Eusebius goes on to say, with evident exaggeration, speaking of the princes, that this was because of "the great inclination they themselves had towards our belief."

Favourable Situation of the Church in the Time of Diocletian

The future was to show that this inclination was not very marked among certain members at least of the imperial college. But it is none the less true that at that time in the palace itself some very exalted and very powerful influences were exerting themselves in favour of the Church. It seems beyond doubt that the empress Prisca, wife of Diocletian, and their daughter Valeria were, if not full Christians, at least catechumens.⁷ Their conversion may perhaps have been due to the numerous faithful then serving in the court of Nicomedia where Diocletian resided, if they had not become Christians earlier still and themselves recruited their Christian staff. However this may be, these palatine Christians were very much respected. "What shall I say," writes Eusebius,⁸ "of those of our brethren who served in the palace, and those who commanded them? These latter allowed their servants in their presence a complete freedom of speech and of conduct in matters of religion; the same was true of their spouses, children, and servants; these were all permitted almost to glory freely in their faith, and they were regarded with more favour than the rest." He mentions Dorotheus the Great Chamberlain, and Gorgonius and Peter,⁹ also belonging to the royal bedchamber, as having been especially intimate with the imperial family. He also names, among the high magistrates then professing the Christian faith, Philoromus, *juridicus* of Alexandria or chief justice of Egypt,¹⁰ and Adauctus, *comes rei privatae*, superintendent of the private domain and of the imperial finances.¹¹

The prescriptions of the Council of Elvira (Illiberis in Spain), held about the year 300,¹² which subjected to a relatively moderate penance those Christians who had been guilty or suspected of some compromise with paganism in the exercise of public functions,

⁷ Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, xv.

⁸ *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, 1.

⁹ The last-mentioned is referred to in another passage (*ibid.*, VIII, vi, 4).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, VIII, ix, 7.

¹¹ *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xi, 2.

¹² We deal with this Council in Bk IV.

constitutes a new proof of the *entente* which *de facto* existed then between the Church and the civil society. Christians must have been more numerous than ever in the army, for when the situation changed once more it was thought necessary to purge it.

At the same time the general movement of conversion was intensified, for the churches were full and new ones had to be built. "How is one to describe," writes Eusebius again in his *Ecclesiastical History*,¹³ "these innumerable receptions into the Church, the crowds in the assemblies in each town, and the remarkable concourse of the multitude in the houses of prayer? Indeed, because of these things, henceforth people were not content with the buildings of former days, and in all the cities large and great churches began to rise from the soil. No hatred intervened to prevent us progressing with the times, and each day saw an increase in our numbers."

Christians might well have thought then that they were going to realise the peaceful conquest of the Roman world without further trials. But the close of the reign of Diocletian would undeceive them.

¹³ *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, i, 5-6.

CHRISTIAN WRITERS OF AFRICA

§ I. TERTULLIAN¹*Origins of Christian Latin Literature*

APART from the Octavius of Minucius Felix, which is of uncertain date,² Christian Latin literature appears for the first time in 197 with the works of Tertullian.³

At Rome, Greek was still at that time the official language of the

¹ Bibliography.—Editions: Migne, P.L., Vols. I-II. F. Oehler, 1851-1854; ed. minor (1854). *Corpus Script. Eccles. Latin.*, Vol. XX, ed. Reifferscheid and Wissowa, 1890. *De spectaculis*, *De idololatria*, *Ad Nation.*, *De animae testim.*, *Scorp.*, *De orat.*, *De baptismo*, *De pudicitia*, *De jejunio*, *De anima*. *Ibid.*, Vol. XLVII, ed. Kroymann, 1906: *De patientia*, *De resurrectione*, *Adversus Hermogenem*, *Adversus Valentinianos*, *De praescriptione*, *Adv. Praxeas*, *Adversus Marcionem*. For the *De paenitentia* and the *De pudicitia*, see also the edition of P. de Labriolle, 1906, in *Textes et Documents*, and for the *De praescriptione haereticorum*, *ibid.*, 1907. For the *Apologeticum*, see ed. J. P. Waltzing, 1930, in collection *Les Belles Lettres*. For the *De baptismo*, see ed. D'Alès, Rome, 1933, in coll. *Textus et Documenta*.

Studies: P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. I, 1901; A. D'Alès, *La Théologie de Tertullien*, 1905, *L'Édit de Calliste*, 1914; P. de Labriolle, *Histoire de la littérature latine chrétienne*, 1924, pp. 72-144; Mgr. Freppel, *Tertullien*, 2 vols., 1861-1862; J. Tixeront, *Tertullien moraliste*, in *Mélanges de Patrologie*, 1921, pp. 117-152; U. Moricca, *Storia della Letteratura latina cristiana*, Vol. I, Turin, 1925, pp. 109-368; J. Lortz, *Tertullian als Apologet*, Bonn, 1927-1928, 2 vols.

² Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 580.

³ The Acts of the Scillitan martyrs belong to the year 180 (cf. *supra*, Bk. II, pp. 404-405). But this very valuable document is hardly a literary work. St. Jerome writes (*De viris illustribus*, liii): "The priest Tertullian is the first of the Latins after Victor and Apollonius." Of Apollonius we have nothing to say here; his Acts, known to Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxi) have been rediscovered in Armenian by the Mechitarists of Vienna (1874), and in Greek by the Bollandists (*Analecta Bollandiana*, 1895, pp. 108-123). Jerome seems to have known them only through Eusebius (Bardenhewer, *Altkirchl. Literatur*, Vol. II, pp. 623 *et seq.*). We have mentioned Victor in connection with the Easter controversy. Most of the documents concerning it were written in Greek, as, for instance, the letter of Irenaeus and that of the Roman synod mentioned by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii, 3). But it seems that there were also some Latin writings, referred to by St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, xxxiv; cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 52-54. It is noteworthy that the only bishop of Rome of that time who, to our knowledge, wrote in Latin, was an African.

Church.⁴ Greek was also not unknown at Carthage, but it had not there a diffusion comparable to that it enjoyed at Rome. Greek inscriptions there are rare;⁵ the *Acts* of the Scillitan martyrs are in Latin; the same is true of those of St. Perpetua. At the same time, in the *Acts* of Perpetua, the Latin text is here and there studded with Greek words,⁶ and the priest Saturus, narrating his vision, shows us Perpetua conversing in Greek with the bishop Optatus and the priest Aspasius.⁷ Tertullian composed some of his works in Greek; he translated them into Latin to ensure their diffusion.

What these facts reveal is confirmed by the study of the epigraphic texts: the Greek language, which was familiar to cultivated people and to the Easterns, was unknown not only to the indigenous population but also to the majority of the Roman colonists.⁸

This prepares us for some of the characteristics of African literature and theology. As Hellenism had scarcely penetrated into Africa, the conception of Christianity there would not be quite the same as that at Rome or Alexandria. On the one hand, we have Clement and Origen; on the other, Tertullian and Cyprian: what a contrast! Clement was full of admiration for Greek philosophy, which he regarded as a gift from God and the schoolmaster who had guided the Greeks towards Christ, as the Law had trained the Jews. Tertullian, on the contrary, writes. "What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem, between the Academy and the Church, between heretics and Christians? Our teaching comes

⁴ Cf. Kauffmann, *Handbuch der altchristlichen Epigraphik*, Freiburg, 1917, p. 30: "The official diffusion of Greek in imperial Rome in the second and third centuries accounts for the fact that in addition to Latin texts we find many Greek ones (in the inscriptions). Thus, all the bishops in the papal catacomb had Greek epitaphs, and it seems that this language was then the language of the Church." The epitaph of Pope Cornelius, who died in 253, is in Latin, but it seems later than the third century; that of Gaius, who died in 296, is in Greek.

⁵ Cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, p. 51, n. 2. We find also a Latin inscription written in Greek characters (*ibid.*, p. 50, n. 8). At Rome there are other examples of this simultaneous use of the two languages or the two alphabets (Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, p. 30).

⁶ When Christ receives St. Perpetua into Paradise, he says to her: "Bene venisti, tegnon." On the relation between the Latin and Greek texts of the *Acts*, cf. J. Armitage Robinson, *The Passion of St. Perpetua*, 1891, pp. 2 *et seq.*

⁷ Ch. xii, *ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

⁸ Latin itself was not spoken in a pure form: Septimius Severus, whose education had been very carefully carried out, always betrayed his origin (he was born at Leptis) by his African accent. It was still worse in the case of his relatives: "His sister came to see him; she could hardly speak Latin and made him blush; he hastened to give the laticlave to her son and to load him with presents, and then to send her back to Leptis with him" (Spartianus, *Severus*, xv, 7).

from Solomon, who himself taught that we must search for God in simplicity of heart. So much the worse for those who have invented a Stoic, Platonist, or Dialectic Christianity."⁹ The contrast is perhaps still more marked between Origen and Cyprian, between the theologian whose highest ambition was to contemplate more profoundly the mysteries of God, and the ruler whose whole effort was towards the reformation of life. The latter could have repeated Tacitus's words: "All our counsels, and all our actions ought to aim at making life better."¹⁰ At Alexandria, Clement was heard to say: "If in heaven there were to be a separation between the two inseparable goods, beatitude and the knowledge of God, and I had to choose between them, I would leave aside beatitude, and choose the knowledge of God." At Carthage, on the other hand, Cyprian repeated the sentence of Minucius Felix: "Non eloquimur magna, sed vivimus."¹¹

It must also be remembered that in Africa the Latin population at the time we are considering was almost exclusively affected by Christian preaching;¹² but in this continent it had colonised it was superimposed upon an indigenous population with which it had little contact. The Latin population appeared thus as an élite, numerous in Carthage, but elsewhere somewhat scattered. Christianity had spread to a great number of towns, villages and country parts. At the time of Tertullian, a council assembled seventy bishops,¹³ and one of the councils presided over by Cyprian numbered eighty-seven.

These figures indicate without any doubt a very extended propagation of Christianity. But they do not tell us the extent of the Christian population governed by these bishops. It must have varied greatly in importance. Carthage, the whole population of which reached and doubtless exceeded half a million inhabitants, dominated this crowd of little municipalities or hamlets; its situation

⁹ *De praescriptione*, vii, 9, 11.

¹⁰ *Dialogus de oratoribus*, v.

¹¹ "It is not our eloquence which is great, but our life" (*De bono patientiae*, iii).

¹² The Berber tribes were reached later, and then only superficially. Cf. P. Jacquin, *La Mission chrétienne*, in *Histoire générale comparée des Missions*, published by Descamps, 1932, pp. 137 et seq.

¹³ This Council, presided over by Agrippinus, seems to have been contemporary with the *De Baptismo* of Tertullian, between 200 and 206 (D'Alès, *Saint Cyprien*, p. 238). Cf. *Théologie de Tertullien*, p. 228, Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxii, 4; lxxii, 3; Augustine, *De unico baptismo contra Petilianum*, xiii-xxii.

was comparable to that of Alexandria in Egypt, but was very different from those of the cities of Asia, which, in spite of their inequality, had their own histories, traditions, and municipal life.¹⁴ The churches varied in importance like the cities themselves, and the bishop of Carthage had an unquestioned authority over all the other African bishops, and especially over those of Proconsular Africa and Numidia.¹⁵

Tertullian: His Intellectual Formation

Tertullian was born in Paganism¹⁶ between 150 and 160, probably at Carthage. His father, an officer or functionary, had the title of "proconsular centurion." Tertullian led as a pagan a free life, of which he accused himself when he became a Christian,¹⁷ frequenting the "cruel sports" of the amphitheatre.¹⁸ He retained so painful a memory of these that he subsequently wrote: "I prefer to leave much unsaid rather than revive these memories."¹⁹

Like his contemporary and compatriot Apuleius, Tertullian was trained in Rhetoric. When he had become a Christian and a priest, he one day amused himself by displaying his powers, and about 208 or 209 wrote the *Treatise on the Mantle*, to explain to idlers why he had changed the toga for the pallium. "This treatise is in itself only a witticism, a literary curiosity, and would scarcely deserve a moment's consideration, were it not for the fact that it brings out into full light the tyranny which education exerted even over the minds of those the most completely converted to Christianity."²⁰ Of greater value than this Rhetoric was the science of Law, which deeply influenced the intellectual formation of Tertullian. It was to put in the hands of the apologist arms which would serve not only for exhibition but also for combat. After the pagans, heretics were in their turn to feel their power: the argu-

¹⁴ Cf. Leclercq, *L'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. I, pp. 78-83.

¹⁵ Mauretania was regarded as a missionary territory, and depended more directly on Rome. On the propagation of Christianity in Africa, see above, pp. 780-783.

¹⁶ *Apol.*, xviii, 4: "There was a time when we like you laughed at these truths. We came out from your ranks. A man is not born a Christian—he becomes one."

¹⁷ *De resurrectione carnis*, lix: "I know indeed that it is in the same flesh that I once committed adulteries, and now do my best to observe continence."

¹⁸ *Apol.*, xv, 5.

¹⁹ *De spectaculis*, xix.

²⁰ G. Boissier, *La fin du paganisme*, Vol. I, p. 258. The careful study which Boissier has made of this little work should be read (*ibid.*, pp. 221-259).

ment of prescription, taken from juridical language, will give to the classic thesis on Tradition a new form and efficacy.²¹ From this formation Tertullian also derived the habit of condensing his thought into formulæ. Vincent of Lerins already noticed this: "We find in him almost as many sentences as words," and his sentences are so strongly worded that their brilliance dazzles us and they fix themselves in our memory. Who does not remember that "the blood of Christians is a seed,"²² or recall the "witness of a soul which is naturally Christian"?²³ These gems, so numerous in Tertullian, attract the attention of the reader, but sometimes also they bewilder. One who knows his works well has written of him: "He is without doubt the most difficult Latin writer; no other calls for such great efforts on the part of his readers."²⁴ He calls for them, but he also obtains them, for one feels very soon that this labour is not in vain, and that under those sparkling facets there generally lies a great idea which is all the more appreciated because of the difficulty in grasping it.

The Apologeticum

Tertullian has not told us about his conversion; we may suppose with likelihood that the motive which led to it is that which he himself so often brings forward: the heroic constancy of the martyrs. His conversion was doubtless quite recent when he wrote the *Ad Nationes* and the *Apologeticum* (197). These two books, and above all the second, reveal to us the apologist; we will add to it the *Adversus Judaeos*, written between 200 and 206, and the *Ad Scapulam*, which belongs to the end of 212.

The *Ad Nationes* preceded the *Apologeticum* by a few months. These two books, written in the same year, defend the same thesis. Accordingly we are not surprised to find in both the same examples and the same arguments, but they are set forth with different aims. The *Ad Nationes* is addressed to the public in general, the *Apologeticum* to the provincial governors. The first work, which answers

²¹ Some have wrongly endeavoured to identify Tertullian with a lawyer who lived in the second century and who is known to us by the *Digests*. This hypothesis, defended by Griselhart in 1912 (*Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte aus Tertullian*, Ravensburg, 1912) is well refuted by Lortz (*op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 223).

²² *Apol.*, i, 13.

²³ *Ibid.*, xvii, 6.

²⁴ Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa*, Vol. II, p. 606.

the complaints of pagans against Christianity, turns these back against the pagan religion. The second aims above all at showing the illegality of the persecutions. The first is a declaration of war against paganism, the second a plea in favour of the Christian religion.²⁵ But this plea is often couched in an aggressive tone. For Tertullian, to defend means to attack, but the juridical standpoint is the one he chooses. He is the first to adopt it, and hence the *Apologeticum* marks an epoch in the history of Christian literature.

From the very beginning, a rapid sequence of antitheses brings out the contrast between Christians and the criminals of common law. The two groups of accused are contrasted first of all by their attitudes:

Malefactors seek to hide themselves, they try not to show themselves; taken in the act, they tremble; when accused, they deny; even when subjected to torture, they do not confess easily, or always; when condemned, they despair . . . they desire not to be the authors of what they admit to be evil. Does a Christian do anything of the like? Not one blushes, none repents, unless it be of not having become a Christian sooner. If he is denounced, he glories in it; if he is accused, he does not defend himself; when interrogated he himself confesses his faith; when condemned he gives thanks.²⁶

The Pagan Legal Process

In the process, the contrasts are no less striking. When the others learn of their accusation, they can defend themselves or arrange for a lawyer to defend them; he pleads and is answered. Christians alone are refused the right to speak. all that they are asked is to confess themselves to be Christians. And what contradictions there are in the establishing of their crime! According to the rescript of Trajan, Christians should not be sought out, but if they are brought before the tribunal, they must be punished:

What a strange sentence, illogical of necessity! As innocent people they must not be sought out; as criminals, they must be punished. They are spared, and they are cruelly treated: people shut their eyes, and punish them. . . . If you condemn them, why do you not seek them

²⁵ A very careful comparison of these two works has been made by Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-219.

²⁶ I, 11-12.

out? If you do not seek them out, why do you not acquit them? For the seeking out of brigands there are in each province a detachment of soldiers chosen by lot: against those guilty of *lèse majesté* and public enemies, every man is a soldier, and the search extends to accomplices and to confidants. In the case of the Christian alone it is not lawful to seek him out, but it is lawful to bring him before the judge, as if the search had some purpose other than to bring him before the judge! You thus condemn a man who has been denounced, whereas no one has ordered that he should be sought for! I would say that if he deserves punishment, it is not because he is guilty, but because he has allowed himself to be captured, while all the time he ought not to have been sought for (II, 8-9).

This is not the only anomaly in this criminal procedure:

When those others who are accused deny their guilt, you apply torture to make them confess; only to Christians do you apply it to make them deny. . . . A man cries "I am a Christian." He says what he is, and you wish to hear him say what he is not. You, who preside to arrive at the truth, make every effort to hear from us a lie. "You ask me," says the accused, "if I am a Christian: I am. Why do you torture me contrary to the rules of justice? I confess, and you torture me. What would you do were I to deny? When the others deny, you do not easily believe them, but if we deny, you believe us at once" (II, 10-13).

This pressing argument is yet only a beginning: Tertullian goes on to demonstrate positively the innocence of Christians. They are charged with clandestine crimes: no enquiry has ever confirmed these infamous calumnies, which are so unlikely that they collapse of themselves. If the pagans believe them, is it not because they are conscious of similar crimes: the human sacrifices offered by the Carthaginians to Saturn, by the Gauls to Mercury, and by the Romans to Jupiter? It is among the pagans that infanticide, abortion, and incest are found: among Christians, morals are pure, and there are some among them who keep a virginal continence; there are among them aged men who are as pure as children, "*senes pueri*" (ii, 6-9).

The Accusation of Atheism

Having dealt with these calumnies, the apologist passes on to complaints of a religious nature (x-xxvii): "You say that we do

not honour the gods, and do not offer sacrifices for the emperors." This accusation of atheism, so popular and so dangerous, had been refuted over and over again; Tertullian gives to his pleading his own personal mark by the vehemence with which he attacks polytheism and idolatry, by his appeal to the spontaneous witness of the human soul, "O testimonium animae naturaliter christianae" (xvii, 6), and lastly by the care he takes to set forth Christian doctrine, and especially the theology of the Word, and the Incarnation (xxi). These outlines are repeated and completed in his treatises on the *Testimony of the Soul* and *Adversus Praxean*.²⁷

The Accusation of lèse-majesté

After the crime of atheism, there remained a final complaint, the most dangerous of all in the eyes of the Roman magistrates, that of *lèse-majesté* (xxviii-xlv). Tertullian's discussion of this point is particularly interesting, and displays his best qualities, and also his most dangerous exaggerations. He paints for us a portrait of a Christian praying for the Emperor, "with eyes uplifted, and hands stretched out, for they are pure, his head uncovered, because we have no cause to be ashamed, and with no need for anyone to tell us what to say, for we pray from the heart. . . . While we are thus praying with hands lifted up towards God, let iron nails tear us asunder! . . . The very attitude of the Christian who prays shows him to be ready for all tortures. Go on, most excellent governors, and seize a soul which is praying to God for the Emperor! The crime will be there, where is the true God and his worship!" (xxx, 4-7).

These prayers are prescribed for us by the Scriptures: we pray even for our persecutors (xxxix); we pray for the Empire (xxxii); we see in the Emperor, not a god, but one chosen by God; and since it is our God who has chosen him, he belongs to us more than to anyone else (xxxiii). "Augustus, the founder of the Empire, did not even desire to be called 'Lord.' For that is one of the names of God. In truth I will give the emperor the name of 'Lord,' but in its ordinary sense (*more communi*), and provided I am not compelled to give it to him in the sense in which I attribute it to God. For the rest, I am free in respect to him; I have only one Lord, the

²⁷ Cf. *infra*, pp. 822 and 831.

almighty and eternal God, who is also the Lord of the Emperor himself."²⁸

These words are an authentic expression of the Christian faith, loyally subject to the Emperor, but reserving adoration for God alone. But Tertullian, who so well understands and defends the traditional attitude of the Church, betrays it in other passages by his exaggerations and provocations:

If we wished to act, not as secret avengers, but as declared enemies, would we not have the force of numbers? . . . We are of yesterday, and already we have filled the earth and all that belongs to you: the cities and their quarters,²⁹ the fortified posts, the municipalities, the villages, even the camps, the tribes, the decuries, the palace, the senate, the forum: we have left you only the temples. We can number your armies: the Christians of one single province are greater in number. . . . We would have been able, even without arms and without revolting but merely by separating from you, to combat you. For if, forming so great a multitude of men, we had broken with you and gone to establish ourselves in some quiet corner of the earth, the loss of so many citizens of so many kinds would assuredly have covered with shame the rulers of the world; indeed, this withdrawal would have sufficed in itself to punish them (xxxvii, 4-6).

A little further on, the apologist claims that Christians could not be seditious, and for this reason: "No affairs are so foreign to us as public affairs. We know only one republic, common to all, namely the world" (xxxviii, 3). And again: "Our only interest in this world is to get out of it as soon as possible" (xli, 5).

In the following chapter, Tertullian changes his tone: "We remember that we owe thanks to God . . . there is not one fruit of his works that we reject. . . . We dwell in this world with you; with you again we sail the seas; with you we serve as soldiers, work on the land, and carry on commerce; with you we exchange the products of our arts and of our labours. How can we seem unnecessary for your affairs, seeing that we live with you and among you? I do not understand it" (xlii, 2-3).

These are very wise protestations, but they are not sufficient to correct the acrimony of the declarations which have preceded.

²⁸ This text is one of those that best show the danger created for Christians by the imperial cultus, and the care with which these affirmed their civic loyalty while vindicating their religious independence. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, p. 30 and n. 1.

²⁹ *Urbes, insulas*. It seems wrong to translate *insulas* as "isles," as is often done.

After a last discussion concerning certain points of Christian doctrine and their relation to the teaching of philosophers,³⁰ Tertullian closes with a resounding peroration:

Your most refined cruelties are of no use; rather they constitute an attraction for our religion. We increase our numbers when you harvest us, for the blood of Christians is a seed. . . . This very obstinacy with which you reproach us is a lesson. For who, seeing this spectacle, does not feel himself shaken, or does not try to find out what is behind all this? Who has sought this, without becoming one of us? Who has joined us, without aspiring to suffer in order to purchase the plenitude of the grace of God, and to obtain from Him complete forgiveness at the price of his blood? For there is no fault for which the martyr does not obtain pardon. And that is why we render you thanks immediately for your sentences. And thus divine things differ from human ones: when you condemn us, God absolves us.

Value of the Apologeticum

Such is this work, the most eloquent and effective of all that Tertullian wrote. No voice so powerful as his had as yet made itself heard in favour of the persecuted Christians. Those who for so long had been suffering and dying in silence, must have heard his plea with great joy. Doubtless other apologists had preceded Tertullian at Rome and in the East,³¹ but their *Apologies* were written in Greek, and in far-off churches, and though written with touching sincerity, they had not the force of the *Apologeticum*. The personal mark of Tertullian appeared above all in his vigorous appeal in the name of legality and of natural equity, and in the name of Christian virtue which is fecundated when it is destroyed. His vigour was unfortunately accompanied by exaggerations, which are found especially in the third part (xxviii-xlv). In refuting the ac-

³⁰ Philosophy is discredited by the personal unworthiness of philosophers (xlvi, 10-18); the best of its contents is derived from the Bible (xlvi, 1-4). Ch. xlviii is devoted to the resurrection of the body and to the eternal fire of hell. As an advocate wishing to push his point to the extreme end, Tertullian adds: "Even supposing that our teaching were false and should be regarded only as a prejudice, it is at least necessary; it may be foolish, but it is useful; those who accept it are obliged to become better, through the fear of eternal torment, and the hope of eternal happiness" (xlix, 2). We see once more in this work the mark of a man who has more zeal than judgment.

³¹ Many of the chapters of the *Apologeticum* display the traditional themes of the Greek apologetic of the second century: the temporary character of the Greek religion (xii), the folly of idolatry (*ibid.*), the late date of the philosophers

cusations of *lèse-majesté*, Tertullian successively adopts two positions which it is difficult to reconcile: sometimes he exalts the submission of Christians, who pray for the Emperor and serve him; at other times he utters threats, in which we see not so much the spirit of Christianity as the violent character of the author: "our withdrawal would be your ruin"; "the republic is foreign to us"; "we are citizens of the world"; "our only interest is to depart from it." All this was dangerous for the safety of Christians, and compromised the loyalty of their attitude. We see in these exaggerations the germ of the Montanist morality which fifteen years later will be opposed by Tertullian himself to the authentic Christian morality.³²

It is not only by this feature that the *Apologeticum* forms a first outline of the picture Tertullian will paint later on. In some lines in ch. xlvii, 10, he already sketches out the argument from prescription;³³ the theology of the Word and of the Incarnation appear in ch. xxi, 10-14, as it will be developed in the *Adversus Praxean*; the theatre is condemned (xxviii, 4) as it will be in the *De spectaculis*. And above all, the apologetic arguments which are later on set forth in full light are already presented in this first work in a briefer form.³⁴ These comparisons are instructive; they show that Tertullian was a tenacious man who appeared at the beginning of his Christian life as he would always remain, although the extreme requirements of his moral system were at that date tempered by the wisdom of the Church, from whom he was to separate himself ten years later.

compared to the prophets whom they had plagiarised (xix and xlvii); the identification of the pagan gods with demons (xxi, xxiii). In this book, as in those which follow, Tertullian often borrows from his predecessors, but he impresses his own mark even on what he takes from them.

³² These exaggerations have been stressed by M. Guignebert in his work, *Tertullien, étude sur ses sentiments à l'égard de l'empire et de la société civile*, Paris, 1901. He regards them as a manifestation of authentic Christianity which, already in Tertullian's day, was being betrayed by the Church. He writes thus at the end of his book (p. 593): "With him (Tertullian) disappears one of the last upholders of the wonderful and unattainable ideal of the very first Christians, and his work represents one of the most vigorous attempts ever made to maintain it, even against his fellow men, against life, and if need be, against the Church." This important matter has been discussed with greater precision and fairness by Lortz, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 303-324.

³³ "We oppose a bar (praescribimus) to these falsifiers of our doctrine, and we say to them that the only rule of truth is none other than that which comes from Christ, transmitted by his own companions, and it is easy to prove that these innovators are much later than they."

³⁴ On these comparisons, cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

The Testimony of the Soul

We cannot hope to examine here all the writings of this brilliant and fiery apologist, but we must at least mention summarily a few of his favourite ideas. First we must mention his *Testimony of the Naturally Christian Soul*. In his selected passages from Tertullian, Turmel enthusiastically praised this little work: "The school of Immanence has in the whole of ecclesiastical literature only one patron, Tertullian."³⁵ At the opposite extreme, Guignebert thinks that it is "one of the weakest works of Tertullian . . . ; consisting entirely of the sophistical study of conventional expressions in current language."³⁶ But the treatise itself does not justify either such enthusiasm or such severity. It is not very original, and shows obvious Stoic influences;³⁷ it is of interest inasmuch as it shows us Tertullian's preferences: "many apologists before his time derived arguments from the works of philosophers: the argument is unsatisfactory; it is better to appeal to the witness of a soul not yet Christian, foreign to all culture." It is only too certain that Tertullian attributed to this testimony more importance than it deserves, but he was right in appealing to the passionate cries which at certain times rise from the depths of the soul and reveal religious aspirations which God himself has impressed upon it.³⁸

The Ad Scapulam

In the *Ad Scapulam*, we find once more some of the ideas of the *Apologeticum*, set forth in a more imperious tone. Tertullian first of all maintains that a man's religion concerns only himself, and that no one ought to impose by force a cult, which should always remain free.³⁹ He warns the proconsul, whom he directly addresses,

³⁵ *Tertullien* (collection *La Pensée chrétienne*, 1905, p. 39).

³⁶ *Tertullien*, p. 252, n. 6.

³⁷ Marcus Aurelius similarly bases an argument on the formulæ of current language: "The earth loves rain, the venerable Ether also loves . . . The world also loves to do that which is destined to happen. I say therefore to the world: 'I embrace thy love!' Do we not say similarly of a thing that 'it loves to happen thus?'" (*Thoughts*, X, 19. Cf. v, 8, 1-3).

³⁸ Cf. Lortz, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 233-245.

³⁹ *Ad Scapulam*, ii: "Humani juris et naturalis potestatis est unicuique, quod putaverit, colere, nec alii obest aut prodest alterius religio. Sed nec religionis est cogere religionem, quae sponte suscipi debeat, non vi, cum et hostiae ab animo libenti expostulentur." Pamel, in a note on this passage, warns the reader not to

of the responsibility he is incurring, and the punishments to which he is exposing himself; Vigellius Saturninus, who began the bloody persecutions, lost his sight; Claudius Lucius Herminianus, who, in order to avenge the conversion of his wife, had treated Christians with great cruelty, was tormented by an illness when alone in his palace and cried out: "Let no one know this, for the Christians would rejoice at it." Caecilius Capella, when on the point of dying at Byzantium, exclaimed in his turn, "Christians, rejoice." Scapula himself has felt the head of God: let him remember that! We have here the theme which will be developed still further by Lactantius, in his *De mortibus persecutorum*. Then, repeating with greater stress one of the arguments of the *Apologeticum*, Tertullian shows the proconsul what would be involved by a proscription of all the Christians in Carthage:

What will you do with so many thousands of people, so many men and women, of all ages and ranks, who will offer themselves to you? How many scaffolds and swords you will require! And what will Carthage itself suffer? You will have to decimate it. Among the condemned, each will be able to recognise his neighbours and his comrades; they will see there perhaps men and women of your own rank, some of the highest personages, relations or friends of your friends. Spare then yourself, if not us; spare Carthage, if not yourself; spare your province, for since your intention has become known, it has been a prey to disturbances from the soldiers and to private hatreds. Our only master is God. He passes before you, and cannot be hidden, and you can do nothing against Him. Those whom you regard as your masters are but men, who will die some day. You will not destroy our sect; know well that when you think you are killing it you are strengthening it. At the sight of such great courage, people are troubled, they ardently wish to find out what is the matter, and when they realise the truth they become ours (v).

Did this eloquence intimidate the persecutors? We do not know. At least it must without doubt have moved more than one already hesitating pagan. Above all it made Christians more conscious of

infer that Tertullian authorises "freedom of the sects," and refers to the *Scorpiace*. Certainly, in the *Scorpiace* ii, Tertullian writes: "Ad officium haereticos compelli, non illici dignum est"; but as the context shows, the constraint mentioned there, and recommended against the heretics, is only the logical compulsion of arguments, and not physical constraint by acts.

their power; and in spite of the defection of the apologist the Church remained grateful to him for having so proudly defended it.

The Controversialist

Tertullian was always a fighter. The study of his apologetical works has revealed him to us grappling with the pagans. His theological writings are also polemical works, but his opponents here are no longer pagans, but heretics: Marcion, Praxeas, the Valentinians, and the various Gnostics. This feature of the theological works of Tertullian distinguishes them clearly from the Alexandrian works, those of Clement and of Origen. The masters of the Catechetical School were preoccupied with the refutation of error, but still more with the contemplation of the truth; their works were not weapons for combat, but instruments of research. Tertullian, on the contrary, affirmed to begin with that there is nothing to search for: the Church possesses the truth, and hence its whole effort is to defend it. Sometimes he modifies this too absolute principle, but we never find in him the hesitations of Origen or even the ardent prayers of Augustine, who besought God to give him, with a purer soul, a more penetrating vision.

For the purpose of this controversy, Tertullian takes his material wherever he finds it. The book *Contra Valentinianos* depends entirely on Irenæus; the treatise *De praescriptione* is much more carefully worked out, but here also the borrowing is evident. Nevertheless, in the controversial works, or at least in the best of them, we find once more what we have admired in his apologetical writings, that personal stamp which gives to an already traditional argument the relief and brilliance of an original thought.

Of all these theological works, the most important are the treatise *De praescriptione*, the five books *Adversus Marcionem*, and the book *Adversus Praxean*. The *Adversus Marcionem* is a very vigorous work of controversy, and the most individual one which Tertullian wrote, but it is above all polemical, and the theology of the author is set forth there less plainly than in the treatise *De praescriptione* and the *Adversus Praxean*. We accordingly prefer to deal with these two latter works.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ On the books against Marcion, cf. *supra*, pp. 641-653. This short expression may be completed by A. D'Alès, *Théologie de Tertullien*, pp. 50-60, 162-185, 245-247; Harnack, *Marcion*, 1924, pp. 328-332.

The De praescriptione

The treatise *De praescriptione contra haereticos*⁴¹ is, with the *Apologeticum*, the work which has had the most brilliant and lasting fame.⁴² The idea of Tradition developed in it is as old as Christianity, and Irenæus had used it powerfully against heretics. Tertullian gives it a juridical form. "By joining theology to jurisprudence, he conferred upon the one all the prestige which the other already exercised over men's minds. In the name of the codes, all teaching which would run counter to the official *Credo* of the Churches is self-condemned, and does not deserve to be listened to."⁴³

This effort was called for by the diffusion of heresy. Many Christians had fallen, and this had been a scandal for others. Tertullian, who had become a priest shortly before,⁴⁴ realised the alarm of those around him, and wished to pacify them. His priestly anxiety gives his work its character: it is not a scholastic discussion, but the effort of a priest who wishes to regain control of troubled minds and give them peace once more:

If a bishop, a deacon, a widow, a virgin, a doctor, or even a martyr were to depart from the rule, would that make heresy truth? Do we judge the faith according to persons, or persons according to the faith? No one is wise, or faithful, or great, if he be not a Christian; but no one is a Christian if he does not persevere until the end.⁴⁵

Christianity and Philosophy

But how has heresy arisen, and where has it found its weapons? From philosophy, replies the polemist; Valentine derived his specu-

⁴¹ Cf. Labriolle's edition; D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-212; Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 305-311.

⁴² On the history of the argument from prescription after Tertullian's time, cf. P. de Labriolle in *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse*, Vol. XI, 1908, pp. 408-428 and 497-514.

⁴³ De Labriolle, *op. cit.*, Intro., p. xxv. As Batiffol points out (*L'Eglise naissante*, pp. 326 *et seq.*), the prescription invoked by Tertullian is not to be understood in the restricted sense of the "praescriptio longi temporis." This prescription by possession is mentioned for the first time in a rescript of December 29th, 199: "It is unlikely that Tertullian should have transferred to the domain of theology an expedient in procedure which was so new and so comparatively rare in the year 200. Tertullian seems rather to have taken the juridical term *praescriptio* in its earliest sense, meaning thereby a preliminary argument before the main pleading, an argument which in his opinion made such pleading unnecessary."

⁴⁴ This work belongs to the years between 200 and 206, i.e. the first years of Tertullian's priestly life.

⁴⁵ *De praescriptione*, iii, 5-6.

lations concerning the Aeons from Plato; Marcion took from the Stoics his useless god; from the Epicureans has been borrowed the denial of the immortality of the soul, and from all the philosophers the denial of the resurrection of the flesh. And whence comes this dialectic, which is able equally to build and to destroy, if not from the "miserable Aristotle"? (vii, 1-6). In this passionate accusation we see already the whole theme which will be taken up again twenty years later by Hippolytus in his *Philosophumena*. Here once again we find these two equally intransigent doctrinaires allied. Doubtless their temperaments explain in part their severity, but even so it must not be forgotten that the half century which had passed since the *Apologies* of Justin had witnessed the rise of the intemperate speculations of the Gnostics and the captious syllogisms of the Adoptianists.⁴⁶

Faced with all these philosophical pretensions, so menacing for the Faith, Tertullian repeats the warning words of St. Paul: "He writes to the Colossians: 'See that no man deceives you by philosophy.' For he had been at Athens." And the impetuous controversialist continues:

What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem, between the Academy and the Church, between heretics and Christians? Our doctrine comes from the Porch of Solomon, who himself taught that we must seek God in complete simplicity of heart. So much the worse for those who have set forth a Stoic, a Platonist or a Dialectic Christianity. For ourselves, we have no need of curiosity after Jesus Christ, nor of research after the Gospel. Once we believe, we have no need to believe anything further. For the first article of our faith is that there is nothing beyond it which we are to believe (vii, 9-13).

The Rule of Faith

This condemnation of all enquiry is manifestly too severe to be accepted without modification. Tertullian himself realises this, and after many hesitations and restatements, he somewhat regretfully concludes: "Seek then from us and amongst ourselves and concerning the things which are ours, and only what can be called in question without affecting the rule of faith" (xii, 5). And straightway Tertullian formulates this rule of faith:

This rule of faith . . . consists in believing this: there is absolutely one God, who is none other than the Creator of the world; it is He who

⁴⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 725 *et seq.*

by his Word, emitted before all things, drew the universe from nothing; this Word has been called his Son. In the name of God He appeared under various forms to the patriarchs, made himself heard at all times in the prophets, and lastly descended by the spirit and power of God the Father into the Virgin Mary, became flesh in her womb, and being born of her became the person of Jesus Christ. Then He preached a new law and the new promise of the kingdom of heaven, He performed miracles, was crucified, and rose again the third day; being raised to the heavens He sat at the right hand of the Father; He sent in his place the power of the Holy Spirit to guide believers, He will come in glory to take the saints and give them the joy of eternal life and the heavenly promises, and to condemn the wicked to eternal fire, after the resurrection of all and the re-establishment of the flesh.⁴⁷

Prescription

After thus setting forth the rule of faith, Tertullian adds: "Such is the rule which Christ instituted . . . and which cannot give rise amongst us to questions other than those raised by heresies and asked by heretics" (xiii, 6). If this rule is observed one may enquire, but even so, faith is much better than curiosity: "Let curiosity give place to faith, let glory give place to salvation! . . . To know nothing against the rule is to know all" (xiv, 5). If heretics are always seeking, it is because they have found nothing.

But, it will be urged, heretics argue from Scripture. This objection leads on to the fundamental question:

This brings us to our main object: it is towards this point that we have been tending, and all that has been said was only a preface in order to prepare the ground for what we have to say. Let us now come to grips on the very ground chosen by our opponents. They bring forward the Scriptures. . . . Hence it is here above all that we block their path, by declaring them incapable of disputing on the Scriptures (xv, 1-3).

This is not timidity, but wisdom: Christ sent the apostles, and these founded churches.

⁴⁷ For the Creed in Tertullian, this text must be compared with *De praescriptione*, xxxvi; *De virginibus velandis* i; *Adversus Praxean*, ii and xxx. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 166-168; D'Alès, *Théologie de Tertullien*, pp. 256-258; Dom Capelle, *Le Symbole romain au deuxième siècle*, in *Revue bénédictine*, 1927, pp. 37-39. None of these texts gives a literal transcription of the Creed. A comparison is enough to show this, but this also enables us to separate out the traditional formula from glosses and comments. It is in the *De virginibus velandis*, 1, that the formula is the most free from glosses.

From these facts I derive this prescription. Once Jesus Christ our God had sent the apostles to preach, we may not receive any other preachers than those Christ has instituted. . . . But what was the subject of their preaching? . . . Here again I raise this prescription that, in order to find this out, we must necessarily address ourselves to these same churches which the apostles founded in person. . . . In these conditions it is clear that every doctrine which is in agreement with that of these churches, the matrices and sources of the faith, should be regarded as true, for it evidently contains what the churches received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God. . . . We communicate with the apostolic churches, because our doctrine in no wise differs from theirs, and that is the sign of truth (xxi, 1-7).

The proof is so plain that once it is set forth it admits of no answer. It is in vain that, in order to reply to it, the heretics pretend either that the apostles did not know all things, or that they did not reveal to all the whole of what they knew, or again, that the churches have not received or kept faithfully the doctrine transmitted to them. For even if one were to grant these unlikely suppositions, heretics would still have to explain the agreement of the various churches in the same faith: "that which is found identically in a great number comes not from error but from tradition" (xxviii, 3). Like unity, antiquity is also a guarantee of truth: "how could there have been Christians before Christ was known, or heresies before the true doctrine?" (xxix, 4).

Where then was Marcion, the pilot of Pontus, so zealous for Stoicism? Where was Valentine, the disciple of Platonism? . . . If any of the heresies dare to trace themselves back to the apostolic age in order to seem to have been bequeathed by the apostles, pretending to have existed in the time of the apostles, we have a right to say to them: "Show us the origin of your churches; enumerate the succession of your bishops from the beginning, in such a way that the first bishop had as guarantor and predecessor one of the apostles, or one of the apostolic men who remained until the end in communion with the apostles." For that is the way in which the apostolic churches set forth their history. For instance, the church of Smyrna relates that Polycarp was installed by John; the church of Rome shows that Clement was ordained by Peter. And in general, the other churches similarly exhibit the names of those who were established by the apostles in the episcopate and are thus derived from the apostolic seed (xxx, xxxii).

There were already heresies in the apostolic times, grosser than those of to-day, but doctrinally these are connected together, and

the condemnation of the former affects also the latter. Our doctrine, on the other hand, is that which the apostles held. Is a proof desired? Interrogate the apostolic churches:

Are you near to Achaia? You have Corinth. Are you not far from Macedonia? You have Philippi, and Thessalonica. If you go to the Asiatic coast, you have Ephesus. If you are on the confines of Italy, you have Rome, whose authority is also our own support. Happy church, in which the apostles poured out all their doctrine together with their blood! Peter there suffered a death similar to that of the Lord. Paul was there crowned with a death like that of John (the Baptist). The apostle John was plunged there into boiling oil, but came out unharmed, and was sent away into an island. Let us see what this church has learnt, what she teaches, and what she certifies, as well as the African churches (xxxvi, 2-4).

Once more Tertullian recalls here the baptismal creed, which he sets forth very briefly, and then adds: "The Church marks this faith with water, she clothes it with the Holy Spirit, she feeds it with the Eucharist, she exhorts to martyrdom, and receives no one in opposition to this teaching."

Hence heretics have no right to our good things:

As they are not Christians, they have no right to the Christian books, and we may justly say to them: "Who are you? When and whence did you come? What are you doing with my things, seeing that you do not belong to me? By what right, O Marcion, are you cutting down wood in my forest? What right have you, Valentine, to change the course of my streams? Who authorises you, O Apelles, to remove my landmarks? This domain belongs to me, I have long possessed it, it was mine before your time. I have authentic documents, emanating from the owners themselves to whom the property belonged. I myself am the heir of the apostles" (xxxvii, 3-4).

The book concludes with a pressing exhortation: "These men have perverse minds; this struggle, which we must face up to, is necessary for the faith, in order to manifest the elect and reveal the reprobate" (xxxix, 1).⁴⁸ These men have talent and ease, without doubt, but the same qualities are to be found in those who

⁴⁸ "Cum quibus luctatio est nobis, fratres, merito contemplanda, fidei necessaria . . ." P. de Labriolle translates "merito contemplanda" as "which we must therefore study." But that is inexact. Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria thought that the study of heretics was useful, but Tertullian never thought so, and the text has not that meaning.

plagiarise Virgil or Homer. Such perversions come from the devil, like the idolatrous imitations of the Christian mysteries which are found in the cult of Mithra, or in the superstitions of Numa Pompilius. The discipline of the heretical churches similarly bears witness to their vanity; they have no authority, they do not know how to distinguish catechumens from the faithful, and ordinations take place in a haphazard way: "To-day they have one bishop, to-morrow another. To-day such a one is deacon, who will to-morrow be a lector; to-day such a one is a priest, who will to-morrow be a layman; they entrust priestly functions to laymen" (xli, 8). They take no pains to convert the pagans, but only to pervert Catholics. They are unable to edify, and seek only to ruin. The imagination which created their doctrine dissolves and transforms it unceasingly; "most of them have no church; without mother, or dwelling, and without faith and exiled, they wander like vagabonds and outlaws" (xlii, 4). And finally, in a picture painted with bitter and terrible irony, he describes the judgment of Christ, and heretics pleading that neither Jesus nor the apostles had sufficiently taught or warned them, and then, in presence of the dumbfounded just, the Lord himself having to admit that He had deceived them. "There," cries Tertullian, "you have what may be imagined by those who are misled and who do not keep themselves from the danger which threatens the truth of the faith" (xliv, 12).

Importance of the Work. Tradition

Such is the *De praescriptione*, which, together with the *Apologeticum*, is the most vigorous and durable of all Tertullian's works. We recognise at a glance the theses dear to St. Irenæus concerning tradition, and in particular, concerning the decisive value of the witness of the apostolic churches; but these theses are here set forth and defended with a brilliance which gives them a new force; the juridical form of the argument enhances its rigour, and the mordant style makes it even more penetrating. If however we pay more attention to the ideas, we find that they are less rich, less balanced, and sometimes less exact than in Irenæus. There is a certain exaggeration in the condemnation of philosophy and of all enquiry;⁴⁹ the argument from the episcopal lists referred to in ch. xxxii is less developed than in Irenæus, and the fundamental office of the

⁴⁹ Chs. vii and xiv in spite of the incidental reservation in ch. xii, 5.

Roman Church (xxxvi, 3) is less strongly marked. Again, in this study of tradition, we do not see so clearly the inmost aspect of this life which is transmitted by the Spirit of God and fecundates and renews the Church continually.⁵⁰ This omission is a serious one: tradition certainly founds a right, but above all it transmits a life; of these two elements of the proof, so strongly set forth by Irenæus, Tertullian retains only the former.

What makes the reader indulgent towards these lacunæ and these exaggerations, and wins sympathy for the author, is the priestly concern which is so plain. The book is certainly a controversial work written by a theologian in order to defend doctrine against its opponents, but it is still more the work of a priest who is anxious to defend his flock from the scandal and contagion of heresy.

The Theology of the Trinity

The treatise *Adversus Praxean*⁵¹ resembles the *De praescriptione* in certain respects. We find the same anxiety to combat heretics, the same vigour in attack, the same richness and brilliance of style, but the formulæ of Trinitarian theology have here so striking a relief and are sometimes so happily expressed that they appear as definitive at the threshold of Latin theology, so that the Council of Nicaea will only have to confirm them. But if we consider, not isolated formulæ, but the treatise as a whole, we are obliged to regard it as a very imperfect work, and one which cannot be compared either with the *Apologeticum* or with the *De praescriptione*.

A first remark is suggested by the date of the book: it was composed after 213, when Tertullian was already involved in the Montanist heresy. We perceive this already in the first chapter: Tertullian criticises Praxeas not only because of his Trinitarian heresy, but also because of his opposition to the Phrygian prophets. He asserts that by his false testimony Praxeas forced the Bishop of Rome to condemn the prophecies which until then he had approved. "Thus Praxeas performed at Rome two diabolical works: he expelled prophecy, and implanted heresy; he put to flight the Paraclete, and crucified the Father."⁵² We must not forget, when

⁵⁰ The action of the Holy Spirit is incidentally indicated in ch. xxviii, 1.

⁵¹ Cf. ed. Kroymann, in the Vienna *Corpus*, Vol. XLVII, 1906, and in the collection of Krüger, 1907. Theological study by A. D'Alès, *Tertullien*, pp. 67-103.

⁵² Later on (xxx) we notice Tertullian's recognition of the "new prophecy."

reading this book, that its author had abandoned the Church and had given credence to revelations which she condemned. But the errors found in the work do not render its study profitless. Tertullian, even as a Montanist, remained attached to the Trinitarian dogma; his exposition and defence of it often put us in touch with an authentic tradition set forth in vigorous, firm and clear terms.

We may thus summarise this doctrine: there is only one God and one Lord, and yet there are three, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each of whom is God and Lord. This unity is compatible with this trinity, for between these three there is a unity of origin and unity of substance.⁵³ The Son "is of the substance of the Father":⁵⁴ this is the very formula of Nicaea. The Spirit is "of the Father by the Son,"⁵⁵ a formula which will also be consecrated by tradition, and especially by the Greek fathers.⁵⁶

These relations of origin do not imply any separation. Some abuse the Gospel text: "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world" (*John* viii, 49), and separate the Son from the Father. They are wrong: if the Son came forth from the Father it was as a ray from the sun, as a stream from a spring, as a plant from the seed.⁵⁷ The same comparisons applied to the Holy Spirit show that He also participates in this unity, and thus we are brought back to the formula rightly dear to Tertullian: "I always affirm that there is one substance in three (subjects) united together."⁵⁸ Already these three receive in Tertullian the name of "Persons" which theology will consecrate.⁵⁹

⁵³ Ch. ii: "Above all we must say again that the unity of God is not in question, for it is agreed that there is one only divine substance in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:—three Persons not in condition but in rank, not in substance but in force; not in power but in aspect; one substance, one condition, one power, for there is but one only God communicating himself in diversity of degree, form and aspect under the names of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

⁵⁴ Ch. iv: "Filium non aliunde deduco, sed de substantia Patris."

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*: "Spiritus non aliunde deduco quam a Patre per Filium."

⁵⁶ Cf. T. de Regnon, *Études de Théologie positive*, Vol. IV, 1898, pp. 80-88.

⁵⁷ Ch. xxii. These comparisons were already traditional. Cf. Justin, *Dial.*, lxi, cxxviii; Tatian, *Adversus Graecos*, v; Hippolytus, *Adversus Noetum*, xi. They will remain traditional, and the Nicene Fathers will repeat: "lumen de lumine."

⁵⁸ Ch. xii: "Ubique teneo unam substantiam in tribus cohaerentibus."

⁵⁹ Ch. vii. Arguing against the Modalists, Tertullian writes: "You will not agree that the Word has the character of a substance, lest it might appear as to be a kind of reality and person" (ne ut res et persona quaedam videri possit). And a little lower down: "Whatever the substance of the Word may be, I call Him a Person and I claim for Him the name of Son" (quaecumque ergo sub-

We could wish to stop there. But unfortunately Tertullian's theology contains other theses, which are much less satisfactory. We know what a profound mistrust St. Irenæus felt in respect of human analogies, by which some theologians thought to explain the divine generation.⁶⁰ Tertullian was less reserved; he thought he could scrutinise the secrets of the divine life "before the creation of the world down to the generation of the Word" (v). This language gives rise to anxieties which the rest of the chapter only confirms: the divine generation appears there as developing progressively: in man, reason (*ratio*) is regarded as at first inert; under the effort of reflection, the word (*sermo*) is evolved. God, who conceived the world by his Word, sends forth this Word externally and creates the world;⁶¹ it is only then that Tertullian regards the generation of the Word as perfect and the Word itself as truly the Son of God.⁶² Accordingly we are not surprised to read elsewhere: ⁶³ "There was a time when there existed neither fault nor the Son, and when in consequence the Lord was neither Judge nor Father." ⁶⁴

In this same ch. vii in which we find this dangerous theology we

stantia Sermonis fuit, illam dico personam et illi nomen filii vindico). Cf. xii: "Alium quomodo accipere debeas, jam professus sum, personae, non substantiae nomine." This term is borrowed from juridical language. Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 82 *et seq.*

⁶⁰ *Adversus haereses*, II, xiii, 8 and II, xxviii, 4-6. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 551-553.

⁶¹ Ch. vi-vii: "When God willed to create the beings whom He had conceived in Himself by reason and the word of his wisdom, in their substances and forms, He first of all uttered the Word, which contained in itself its two inseparable companions reason and wisdom, so that all things were made by Him who had projected and conceived all things. . . ." Ch. vii: "Hence it was then that the Word itself received its form and its completion, sound and voice, when God said: 'Let there be light.' This is the perfect birth of the Word, when it proceeds from God. It is first of all produced for thought, under the name of Wisdom: 'The Lord has made me as a beginning of his ways.' Then He is generated for action: 'When He made the heavens, I was near him.' Consequently, making the one of whom He is the Son to be his Father by his procession, He became the first-born, as generated before all, and only Son, as solely generated by God."

⁶² Cf. ch. xii. Explaining the divine word, "Let us make man" at the time of the creation of man, Tertullian says: "It was then that He had near Him a second person, his Word, and a third, the Spirit in the Word." And a little lower: "When the Son had not yet appeared, God said: 'Let there be light, and there was light,' that is, the Word himself, the true light which enlighteneth every man coming into this world."

⁶³ *Adversus Hermogenem*, iii.

⁶⁴ On this conception of the procession and generation of the Word of God in Tertullian, cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-96.

also come up against the materialistic conceptions from which Tertullian was never able to free himself. In order to prove that the Word is a substance, he asserts that He is a body, for God is a body: "Who will deny that God is a body, although He is a spirit? For a spirit is a body *sui generis*." This affirmation is disconcerting; it shows that Tertullian, so scornful for Greek philosophy, was consciously or unconsciously influenced by the Stoic physics. For the Stoics, only bodies exist, and for them a spirit is by definition a body.⁶⁵

Led astray by these materialistic conceptions, Tertullian represents the divinity as possessed in totality by the Father, but only partially by the Son: "The Father is all the substance, the Son is only a derivation from it and a part, as He himself affirms, saying 'The Father is greater than I.'"⁶⁶ In this haze the theology of the Holy Spirit becomes even more confused and muddled than that of the Son.⁶⁷

In the conclusion which terminates the treatise (ch. xxx), Tertullian refers to the "Christian mystery," but also to the "new prophecy"; he thus mentions the two sources he has utilised, the

⁶⁵ "For the Stoics, all causes are bodies, since they are spirits" (*Doxographi*, ed. Diels, p. 310). Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, p. 88 and n. 3.

⁶⁶ Ch. ix. Of course, the words of Jesus in *John* xiv, 28, have a meaning quite different from that given them by Tertullian. We are to rejoice because Jesus returns to his Father, for the Father is greater than He. This comparison applies not to the divine nature, but to Christ's humanity, impatient to ascend to the Father. A little lower (xxxvi) Tertullian, commenting on the account of the Annunciation, interprets, like many other Fathers, "*spiritus Dei*" of the Word. But he explains it thus: "In saying, not God (but the Spirit of God), he wished us to understand him to be a part of the whole, which was to receive the name of Son." And farther on in this same chapter, he represents Him again as "a portion of the whole." Starting from this erroneous conception, Tertullian explains (ch. xiv) that the Father "is invisible because of the plenitude of his majesty, and the Son is visible because of his derived and limited greatness; just as we cannot contemplate the sun in the totality of its substance which is in the heavens, but our eyes can bear its rays and its tempered and partial clarity which descends as far as the earth."

⁶⁷ This confusion is especially obvious in the texts in which Tertullian sets forth the Incarnation of the Son of God (ch. xxvi and xxvii; cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-99). D'Alès concludes: "One thing is certain, and that is that the personality of the Holy Spirit appears in the Treatise *Against Praxeas* only in a very confused manner." In other works (*Adversus Marcionem*, iv, 18, *De baptismo*, x), Tertullian explains that "the portion of the Holy Spirit" which was in John the Baptist left him to concentrate in Jesus, "ut in massalem suam summam." Here we have once more a materialistic conception of a Spirit which has parts, and which can concentrate in Jesus only by withdrawing from the Precursor.

authentic Christian tradition attested by the baptismal faith, and the oracles of Montanus. His trinitarian theology bears this double imprint: in certain aspects the Church recognises her own faith, brought out in strong relief; in others she sees only the personal speculations of a mind already astray and which, in seeking the Holy Spirit, had forgotten the great maxim of his master Irenæus: "Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God."

The Moralist

The moral treatises⁶⁸ of Tertullian are numerous. They may be studied from two points of view, either as testimonies concerning the Christian communities of Africa, or as the expression of the mind of the apologist and of its tendencies. The former aspect is very interesting, but would lead to developments which we cannot dwell on here.⁶⁹ It is Tertullian himself rather than the Christian society that is the object of our own study.

If we consider his work as a whole, we cannot help admiring the elevation and purity of the ideal he sets forth. The pagan world was very corrupt, and Tertullian himself had experienced its stains, but he found also a stream of living water which purifies all those who bathe therein and leads them on towards the sanctity of God himself. This fact, of which he had found abundant proofs around him, converted him, and he in turn invited thither all Christians. Many of his little moral treatises are but homilies; we find in them the zeal of a priest doing his utmost to lead on his flock towards the perfection set before them in the Gospel.

Among several examples, we will single out the treatise *On Patience*, written by Tertullian when already a priest but not yet led astray by Montanism (between 200 and 206). His first words are a humble admission, which it is pleasant to read:

I confess before the Lord God that it is temerity on my part, and perhaps impudence, to preach patience, of which I myself am quite incapable of giving an example: there is nothing good in me. And yet one who sets out to teach and preach a virtue should begin by putting it into practice, and acquire the right to preach by the authority of his example, if he is not to blush because his actions contradict his words.

⁶⁸ Cf. D'Alès, *Tertullien*, pp. 262 et seq.; Tixeront, *Tertullien moraliste*, in *Mélanges de Patrologie*, 1921, pp. 117-152.

⁶⁹ An accurate and vivid sketch will be found in P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 108 et seq.

Tertullian then points out the ideal of patience in God, who never tires of supporting wicked men and doing good to them. Then he finds the same ideal closer to us in Christ, whose life he briefly records, stressing especially the Passion:

I do not speak of his crucifixion, for He came for that end. Could He not have died without suffering outrages? But He willed to die overwhelmed by suffering. They spat upon Him, scourged Him, derided Him, clothed Him in ignoble vestments, and placed on Him a still more ignoble crown. What a wonderful and constant tranquillity of soul! He had willed to hide himself under the aspect of a man, but He did not at all will to imitate human impatience. It was by this trait above all, O Pharisees, you ought to have recognised the Lord, for no mere man could have displayed such patience. All these striking characteristics, which in pagan eyes are so many objections against our faith, but which in fact justify and strengthen it for ourselves, show very clearly to those who have received the grace of faith—show, not by discourses and precepts but by the sufferings undergone by the Lord—that patience is of the nature of God, and is the effect and manifestation of a quality which is proper to Him.

This passage reveals the truly Christian origin of Tertullian's moral teaching: the imitation of God, and the imitation of Christ. At the same time it must be admitted that such pages are rather rare in the works of the controversialist. He rarely invites his disciples to contemplate this ideal, at once so sublime and so peaceful: he hurries on towards a severe and rigid asceticism, the rigour of which is nevertheless fragile because it is human. He takes pleasure in censuring vices and failings, which he pursues with an unrelenting vigour,⁷⁰ and in order to correct them he sets before us an ideal

⁷⁰ See, for instance, the treatise *De virginibus velandis*, and especially the final chapter, addressed to married women: ". . . The veil should descend as far as the dress; it should fall as low as the hair when it is let down, and should cover the neck. . . . One of our sisters was warned about this by an angel in a dream. . . . But what punishment is deserved by those who, even during the singing of the psalms and when they call upon God, remain uncovered! Or by those who when praying put on their heads a piece of lace or a handkerchief, and think themselves covered,—do they not give the measure of their head? Others have hands larger than any lace or any handkerchief; they act like the ostrich, who thinks herself safe when she covers her head. But the rest of the body is uncovered, and the whole is taken, the head with the rest. So will it be with these women who do not cover themselves as they ought." This satire is light; others are cruel, as for instance ch. xiv concerning virgins who fall and who very soon have something else to hide besides their head: "merito itaque dum caput non tegunt ut sollicitentur gloriae causa, ventres tegere coguntur infirmitatis ruina."

of austere virtue which is more Stoic than Christian, and tries to lead us on less by the attraction of a divine ideal than by the pressure of his invectives. In the pagan world, in which superstition had spread everywhere in public and private life, he overwhelms with his censures all that seems to him to be a compromise or even a toleration. This severity manifested itself from the first years of his Christian life; it is in part explained by the persecution which constantly raged against or at least threatened the Church: "all times, and above all our own, are times of iron and not of gold for Christians."⁷¹ But very soon it was increased through contact with Montanism, and took on a fierce bitterness. Not only were all scenic spectacles forbidden,⁷² but all trades which were or might be associated with idolatry. One must not be a maker of idols;⁷³ that goes without saying. But also one must not be a schoolmaster, for that would involve teaching mythology.⁷⁴ One must not be a soldier—for "he who takes the sword shall perish by the sword."⁷⁵ One must not be a merchant, for cupidity is idolatry.⁷⁶ It would be in vain to protest against these prohibitions, which close all the avenues of life and send Christians out into the desert. Tertullian replies:

It is too late to speak in that manner. It was before baptism that you should have reflected and imitated that prudent architect who, before beginning to build the house, drew up a specification in order to see if he could meet the expenses. Moreover, you have now the words and examples of the Lord, which take away from you all excuse. You say: "I shall be in poverty." The Lord has said: "Blessed are those who are in poverty."—"I shall have nothing to eat."—The Lord says to us: "Do not worry about food," and in the matter of clothing, He has given us the example of the lily.—"I must have money."—"You must sell all things and give to the poor."—"I must think of my children."—"Who-soever putteth his hand to the plough and looketh behind him is a bad workman."—"I was in service."—"No man can serve two masters" *De idololatria*, xii).

Such reasoning, set forth by an advocate like Tertullian, might close the mouth of an opponent, but it could convince nobody.

⁷¹ *De cultu feminarum*, ii, 13.

⁷² Cf. *De spectaculis*.

⁷³ Cf. *De idololatria*, ch. iii et seq.

⁷⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, x.

⁷⁵ *De corona*, xi.

⁷⁶ *De idololatria*, xi.

The same is true of the sophistical argument by which the moralist tries to show that a Christian ought not to flee from persecution: God has willed it, He is wise and good, hence we ought not to withdraw ourselves from it; He is almighty, and so we cannot do so.⁷⁷ Any Christian could answer that God often wishes by persecution to chastise us, but not to condemn us to death. Such is the teaching of St. Paul (*II Cor.*, vi, 9), confirmed by the apostle's own life. How often he fled from persecution, at Damascus, Thessalonica, and Ephesus! And great saints like Cyprian and Athanasius have imitated his example.

More dangerous even than these prohibitions is the principle which underlies them: all that God does not expressly allow, He forbids,⁷⁸ just as the Scriptures deny all that they do not affirm.⁷⁹ If Christ did not will for Himself either glory or riches, "it was because He rejected them; if He rejected them, He condemned them; if He condemned them, He regarded them as the pomp of the devil."⁸⁰ Again, if God has not given to lambs a skin naturally red or blue, it is going against his will to tint their wool to these colours.⁸¹ In these traits, and especially in the last, we see the influence of the Stoic and Cynic philosophies;⁸² but if Tertullian echoes this it is because he finds in it the exaggeration in which he himself delights, and in repeating the same ideas he gives them his own impassioned imprint. For Musonius, all this luxury, by which men try to embellish or to burden nature, is unseemly; for Tertullian it is diabolical. The one regards it as a fault, the other as a crime: it is idolatry.

⁷⁷ *De fuga*, vi.

⁷⁸ *De exhortatione castitatis*, iv: "Quod a Domino permissum non invenitur, id agnoscitur interdictum." The text is so read by Oehler; it is read differently by Rigault, reproduced in Migne (*P.L.*, Vol. II, 919). "Quod a Domino permissum non invenitur, id agnoscitur."

⁷⁹ *De monogamia*, iv: "Negat Scriptura quod non notat."

⁸⁰ *De idololatria*, xviii.

⁸¹ *De cultu feminarum*, i, 8: "Though God could have made sheep thus, it is clear He has not willed to do so; that which God has not willed to do we have no right to fabricate. Hence these things are not naturally good, for they do not come from God the author of nature; we see therefore that they come from the devil, the corruptor of nature." On all this cf. Tixeront, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.

⁸² In his dissertation *Philo und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*, Berlin, 1895, Wendland has studied this moral theme of the condemnation of luxury in the name of nature. We find there many features which remind us of Tertullian; what this great polemist added was the idolatrous and diabolical character of luxury.

The Montanist

It was this violent and excessive temperament that led Tertullian into Montanism.⁸³ The Phrygian prophecy which had burst forth in 172 and so rapidly spread through the Asiatic provinces, had in the West only a distant echo. The Church of Lyons, linked to the Christian communities of Phrygia and Asia by close bonds, had intervened at Rome in 177 in order to still the conflict. At Rome, where the Montanists had tried to carry out some propaganda, they had been rejected by the bishop,⁸⁴ and very soon Hippolytus in his *Syntagma* would include Montanism among the thirty-two heresies he denounced.⁸⁵ Nevertheless at Carthage this distant and already suspected heresy was to lead Tertullian astray.

Our surprise is greater when we recall how this great polemist was attached to tradition and to the hierarchy, and how in the treatise *De praescriptione* he had stigmatised the anarchy of the Gnostic and Marcionite churches, and lastly, how he seemed to be on his guard against feminine influences. All this was not likely to lead him to be indulgent towards a sect condemned by the whole Asiatic episcopate and based on the authority of its prophetesses.

These obstacles were great, but not insurmountable. In Tertullian a movement of passion could sweep everything away, and we have here a proof of it. This severe moralist found himself faced with an ecclesiastical authority ready to censure his rigours; the new prophecy brought to him the support of an authority which claimed to be divine and supreme. "Hardness of heart reigned until Christ; the weakness of the flesh will have reigned only until the Paraclete; the New Law suppressed divorce, the new Prophecy has suppressed second marriage."⁸⁶ The polemist will also find in

⁸³ On Tertullian as a Montanist, the most complete study is that of P. de Labriolle, *La Crise montaniste*, pp. 294-468. The texts of Tertullian on Montanism are studied by the same author in *Les sources de l'histoire du montanisme*, pp. lxxviii-lxxx, 12-50. In 1924 M. A. Faggiotto set forth in two brochures, *L'Eresia dei Frigi* and *La Diaspora catafrigia, Tertulliano e la nuova profezia*, a new version of events: Tertullian was opposed to Apollonius, but did not pass over to the Montanists. All this is very weak: cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, 1925, pp. 373-375.

⁸⁴ This bishop, whom Tertullian does not name (*Adversus Praxean*, i), seems to have been Zephyrinus. "We must put the intrigues of Praxeas between 198 and the very first years of the third century, and we must affirm that they centred around Zephyrinus" (P. de Labriolle, *La Crise montaniste*, p. 275).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, and *Sources*, pp. xlvi et seq.

⁸⁶ *De monogamie*, xiv, ed. Oehler, Vol. I, p. 784.

this authority of the Paraclete a supreme revelation which will silence all heretics and take away all thirst for novelty.⁸⁷ For the rest, Christian dogma seems to him to be, not shaken but confirmed by the new Prophecy: "Montanus, Priscilla and Maximilla do not preach another God, or divide Jesus Christ, and do not upset in any way the rule of faith and of hope."⁸⁸

Thus, the theologian like the moralist thinks himself upheld by the highest authority, and further, the spiritual man sees opening before him new perspectives illumined by the Spirit. Tertullian awaited impatiently the end of the world, the new Jerusalem, and the reign of a thousand years. It was revealed to him in the name of the Paraclete that the times were near, that the Antichrist had already appeared.⁸⁹ He was told that the heavenly Jerusalem, the descent of which was announced by the Paraclete as the great prelude,⁹⁰ had already been seen in Judea. "Every morning for forty days there has been seen a city suspended in the heavens; the line of the ramparts vanishes with the day, and there is nothing more. We say that this city has been prepared in advance by God in order to receive the saints after the resurrection. . . ." ⁹¹ From that time his preaching became more urgent, his hatred of the world, the flesh and the present life more implacable: "Why wish to have children? Once we have them we hope they will depart before us, in view of the critical times which threaten us; and we ourselves are impatient to escape from this detestable age and be received by the Lord."⁹²

⁸⁷ "The Holy Spirit has dissipated all the ambiguities of earlier times, and has replaced arbitrary words by a clear and limpid explanation of the whole faith, through the new Prophecy which flows from the Paraclete. If you draw from these sources, you will no longer thirst after any doctrine, nor be consumed by the fever of any problem. By constantly imbibing the resurrection of the flesh, you will be refreshed." (*De resurrectione carnis*, lxiii, ed. Kroymann, p. 125).

⁸⁸ *De jejuniis* (ed. Oehler, Vol. I, p. 851). Cf. *Adv. Prax.*, ii: "We have always believed, but we believe still more now that the Paraclete, the guide who leads to all truth, has given us more light."

⁸⁹ *De fuga*, xii (ed. Oehler, Vol. I, p. 487).

⁹⁰ *Adversus Marcionem*, III, xxiv (ed. Kroymann, p. 419).

⁹¹ *Ibid.* On all this cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 330 *et seq.*

⁹² *Ad uxorem*, I, v. In the *Exhortatio castitatis*, xii, the moralist returns to the same theme: "The Christian, like the Apostle, should have only one desire, and that is, not to survive in his children but to depart from this world." He adds other unpleasant observations: "the laws will have to compel men to have children, for no wise man would spontaneously desire them."

The Church and the Spirit

This assurance of the speedy coming of the Last Day, given him by Prophecy, filled him with a sombre joy. But he rejoiced still more keenly at the possession of the Spirit which Prophecy ensured him. The Catholics whom he had abandoned were for him only the "psychicals," or Christians of a second order; the true Church, his own, is the Spirit. "The Church is properly and essentially the Spirit itself."⁹³ It alone has the power to forgive sins, but it does not wish to use it. "The Paraclete himself has said through the new prophets: The Church has the power to forgive sins; but I will not do this, for fear they should commit still more faults."⁹⁴ In this jealously guarded little church, the Spirit, in his view, distributes the charisms. Tertullian recalls with pride: "We have amongst us a sister who has the charism of revelations. In the course of the Sunday solemnities she receives them in spirit during her ecstasies. She converses with the angels and sometimes even with the Lord; she sees and hears mysterious truths; she can read hearts, and prescribes remedies for those who are ill. Whether the Scriptures are being read, or psalms are sung, or discourses are pronounced, or prayers are being said, every exercise furnishes matter for her visions."⁹⁵

Led on by these mirages, the great polemist wandered farther and farther away from the Church, and like the heretics he had so vigorously combated, he made a schism even within the heresy he had embraced; he separated from the general body of the Montanists and formed a little group of "Tertullianists."⁹⁶ In the end he himself "had no longer even a church," but was "without mother,

⁹³ *De pudicitia*, xxi, 16.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, xxi, 7. On the problem of penance, we have mentioned above (p. 709) the two contradictory theses maintained by Tertullian as a Catholic and as a Montanist.

⁹⁵ *De anima*, ix. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *Sources*, p. 21. Tertullian goes on to say that the seer, after a conversation concerning the soul, had a corporeal vision of a human soul: "It seemed to be a spirit, but not deprived of consistence and form: quite the contrary. It seemed capable of being grasped, it was soft, luminous, of the colour of air, and in form just like that of the human body." Tertullian rejoices thus to have his materialistic conceptions confirmed by a vision.

⁹⁶ St. Augustine (*De haereticis*, lxxxvi) tells us about these. In his time they still had a basilica, but after a colloquy with Augustine they were reconciled, and gave up their church to the Catholics.

without faith, exiled, and wandering about like a vagabond and an outlaw."

After his death, he left in the Church the sorrowful memory of a great man who had well served it and had then cruelly attacked it. His works were not forgotten: they were read and utilised, but the name of their author was not mentioned. This kind of interdict lasted for a century; Lactantius is the first to name Tertullian; St. Jerome often quotes him; Vincent of Lerins devotes to him a chapter of his *Commonitorium* (ch. xxiv); Tertullian is for him an example of a man of great talent who might have been a great power for the Church, but who became instead a great difficulty.⁹⁷

To-day the echoes of the Montanist controversy have long since died away, but the lesson is constantly before our eyes. We cannot contemplate the ambitions and errors of Tertullian without recalling the words of Irenæus:

Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace, and the Spirit is truth. Thus, those who do not form part of her do not receive from her maternal breasts the food of life, and do not drink from the pure water which flows from the body of Christ; but they dig for themselves leaky cisterns in earthen ditches, and drink muddy water: they depart from the faith of the Church which would be their guide, they reject the Spirit which would instruct them.⁹⁸

This man, whose talents were so brilliant, and whose character was so generous, had one high ambition, to possess the Spirit of God. But he sought it outside the Church, in a Spirit-Church of his imagination, and in this dream he lost everything.

§ 2. ST. CYPRIAN¹

Prestige of St. Cyprian

St. Cyprian had neither the literary talent of Tertullian, nor the theological erudition and wide views of Irenæus or Origen. But

⁹⁷ Vincent passes a similar judgment upon both Tertullian and Origen. But there is a great distance between these two men, as we shall see from the next chapter.

⁹⁸ *Adv. haereses*, III, xxiv, 1.

¹ Bibliography.—Editions: Hartel, *Corpus Script. Eccles. Latin.*, I-III, 1868-1871; Letters, text and French translation by Bayard, Paris, 1925, 2 vols.—Studies: Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. II, 1902;

he enjoyed an incomparable prestige in Antiquity. In Africa he was the most popular figure of all, and his veneration even gave rise to abuses which had to be repressed. His authority, in spite of some incorrect views on certain points, was recognised by all, including St. Augustine himself. In the East, Macarius Magnes praised him as a thaumaturge.² The appearance of the legend of Cyprian the Magus at Antioch shows the wide diffusion of his cult.³ At Constantinople his authority was so great at the time of the second Council, that the Macedonians attributed to him the *De Trinitate* of Novatian in order to claim support for their errors.⁴ These testimonies, which could be multiplied, are due to the glory of his martyrdom, the authority of his see, and also to the outstanding excellence of his noble, elevated and truly royal soul.

St. Cyprian's Conversion

His Christian life, which had such a brilliant lustre, was very short, and lasted scarcely ten years. He was born in the beginning of the third century, and became a rhetorician and professor of Rhetoric.⁵ He was converted by the priest Caecilius. He has himself, in his *Liber ad Donatum*, described with much candour and freshness his first Christian impressions:

I was wandering blindly in the darkness of the night, tossed here and there in the stormy sea of the world; I was adrift, ignorant of my life,

Saint Cyprien (coll. *Les Saints*), 1914; D'Alès, *Théologie de saint Cyprien*, 1922; P. de Labriolle, *Histoire de la Littérature latine chrétienne*, pp. 176-225; E. W. Benson, *Cyprian, his Life, his Times, his Work*, London, 1897; J. Tixeront, *Mélanges de Patrologie*, 1921, pp. 152-209; P. Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, pp. 399-484.

D'Alès dates St. Cyprian's works thus (*op. cit.*, p. xiii): Before 249: *Ad Donatum*; 249: *Ad Quirinum Testimoniorum libri III*; *De habitu virginum*; 251: *De lapsis*, *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate*; 252: *De dominica oratione*, *Ad Demetrianum*, *De mortalitate*; 253: *De opere et eleemosynis*; 256: *De bono patientiae*, *De zelo et livore*; 257: *Ad Fortunatum de exhortatione martyrii*.

² *Apocriticus*, ed. Blondel, 1876, Vol. III, xxiv, p. 109.

³ Cf. Delehaye, *Cyprien d'Antioche et Cyprien de Carthage*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 1921, pp. 314-332. "Few martyrs achieved so universal a fame" (p. 315).

⁴ Rufinus, *De adulteratione librorum Origenis*.

⁵ At any rate, that is what St. Jerome says. A. Beck, in his dissertation *Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian*, Halle, 1939, has studied the legal knowledge of Cyprian. This shows that he was not a professional like Tertullian, but at least a student. Beck thinks that he may have held a post in the municipal or civil administration.

and a stranger to truth and light. In view of my life as it then was, I thought that which the divine goodness promised me for my salvation very hard. How could a man be born again to a new life? . . . That is what I often asked myself, for I was entangled in the thousand errors of my previous life; I did not think I could get free from them, for I was so much the slave of my vices . . . and I had such complaisance in the evils which had become my constant companions. But the regenerating water washed me from the stains of my previous life, and a light from on high shone into my heart thus purified from its corruptions, and the Spirit coming from heaven changed me into a new man by a second birth. And immediately, in a wonderful way I saw certitude take the place of doubt. The doors that had been shut opened, and light shone in the darkness; I found that which before had seemed difficult to be easy, and possible that which I had thought impossible. . . . You doubtless know and recognise with me what this death of vice and resurrection of virtue took away from me and brought to me in its place. You yourself know this, and I do not boast of it. To praise oneself is a hateful bragging. Yet it may be, not bragging but gratitude, to recall what is attributed, not to the virtue of man but to the blessing of God. To sin no more is the first effect of the faith, and past sins were the effect of human error. From God, I say, comes all our virtue. From God comes our life and our power.⁶

These words will be dear to St. Augustine, and already we hear in them the language of the *Confessions*. Even more than written works, the facts show the reality and depth of his conversion. From the first day, Cyprian aspired to the perfect life; even before his baptism he took a vow of continence,⁷ and distributed to the poor a great part of his possessions. To this detachment from goods was joined another, very rare at that time, a detachment from pagan literature. Novatian was full of memories of Virgil; Tertullian, Lactantius, Jerome and Augustine delighted to quote profane authors, and still more often to utilise them. Cyprian, on the other

⁶ *Ad Donatum*, iii-iv. Cf. *ibid.*, xiv-xv, Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 204 *et seq.*; D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-23.

⁷ This is stated by Pontius, the deacon who wrote the *Life of Cyprian*, *Vita*, ii. On this biography, cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-197. This decision of Cyprian is all the more remarkable in that the priest Caecilius, who had converted and baptised him, was married and when dying left to him the care of his wife and children. It must be noted that the case of Caecilius was at that date exceptional in Africa. "We do not find in the works of Cyprian a single married priest, other than perhaps the unhappy Novatus, who had caused an abortion in his wife by a kick in the stomach (*Epist.*, lii, 2). But did that incident take place after the priestly ordination of Novatus?" (D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 315).

hand, wished to forget them all; he quoted only the Bible. Apart from this, there were some books which he constantly read, but he copied nothing from them: these were the works of his great and unfortunate predecessor Tertullian, which he regarded as covered with a veil of mourning.⁸

Revelations and visions occupy a prominent place in the life and writings of Cyprian.⁹ Some of his contemporaries were scandalised at this;¹⁰ and more than one historian, even to-day, is surprised at it. But if we are to judge the matter fairly, we must recall the wonderful mental equilibrium of this man, his unusual virtues, and also the exceptional difficulties he had to overcome.¹¹

Cyprian as a Bishop

From his baptism, Cyprian took a prominent part in the church of Carthage; he stood out because of his social rank, his fortune, his talents, and above all because of his virtues. He was very soon raised to the priesthood, and already in the first months of 249 he was elected bishop on the death of bishop Donatus.¹² He tried in vain to escape from so great an honour; the almost unanimous will of the priests and faithful of Carthage constrained him to accept the post. There were, however, a few opponents, and at their head

⁸ Monceaux, who points out this reserve on the part of Cyprian, rightly adds (*op. cit.*, p. 208): "He affected an ignorance of all literature stained with idolatry . . . even the Rhetoric which he had taught when in the world. We shall see that Rhetoric had its revenge, and that though the ideas of the bishop were free from it, his style was not."

⁹ The most notable instances are given by D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-82. Harnack has devoted a complete article to this question: *Cyprian als Enthusiast*, in *Zeitschrift für N. T. Wissenschaft*, 1902, pp. 177-191. Some features disfigure this study, as for instance this one: "Cyprian, by his combination of episcopalism and enthusiasm, became, so to speak, the first Pope, and much time had to elapse before he had a successor." Infallibility seems to be confused here with inspiration.

¹⁰ E.g. Florentius, to whom Cyprian replies (*Epist.*, lxvi, 10): "I know, of course, that some think dreams ridiculous and visions absurd, but these are precisely the ones who prefer to believe against the bishops rather than believe a bishop. After all, there is nothing astonishing in this, for the brethren of Joseph said of him: 'Behold our dreamer cometh, come, let us kill him,' and the dreamer later on saw his dream come true, and his would-be murderers and those who sold him, confounded. . . ."

¹¹ We must also mention the examples of so many of his contemporaries, even among the greatest and wisest, as for instance St. Dionysius of Alexandria. Cf. Bk. IV.

¹² Cf. *Epist.*, lix, 6.

five priests who very soon conducted against Cyprian a campaign of jealous opposition, as we shall see.

The new bishop found himself in charge of a numerous church, but one enervated by a long period of peace. He has himself described its weaknesses in his *Treatise on the Lapsed*:

Each one thought only of increasing his patrimony. They forgot what believers had done previously under the Apostles, and ought always to do. Men were consumed with an insatiable covetousness, and worked only to increase their fortunes. There was no devotion in the priests, no faith in the ministers of worship, no mercy in works, no discipline in manners. Men dyed their beards, and women painted their faces. They changed the work of God by staining their eyes and altering the colour of their hair. Artifices and frauds were used to deceive the hearts of the simple; some did not hesitate to have recourse to trickery to circumvent their brethren. People married unbelievers, thus prostituting to Gentiles the members of Christ. Not only did people swear rashly, but they also perjured themselves; they proudly despised the heads of the Church, they injured one another with poisonous words, and separated from one another by tenacious hatreds. Most of the bishops, who ought to have exhorted all the rest and given them an example, neglected their divine functions and became the lackeys of the great ones of this world. They left their pulpits and abandoned their people, to travel about in foreign provinces and to seek to enrich themselves by gainful commerce. At a time when their brethren were hungry in the Church, they wished to have money in abundance, they acquired landed property by cunning and by fraud, and increased their gains by usury.¹³

In a picture of this kind we must expect the exaggeration usual in moralists and orators, but it cannot be wholly wrong. On the eve of the Decian persecution, other documents echo this page of Cyprian.¹⁴ Some points, such as the picture of the usurious bishop, are too precise not to be true: was this not an anticipation of what the Church of Antioch had to suffer fifteen or twenty years later in the person of its bishop, Paul of Samosata?

The Persecution and the Apostasies

The bishop of Carthage contemplated with sadness this lukewarmness in his flock. God revealed to him one day the punishment

¹³ *De lapsis*, vi.

¹⁴ See, for instance, Origen, *Homil. in Jerem.*, IV, iii; cf. Bk. IV.

prepared for it. He showed him in a vision the Father, with his Son on His right hand; the latter seemed sad and discontented. On the other side was a personage armed with a net which he was preparing to cast over the people.¹⁵ Very soon, in fact, the whole Roman world was to be cast into a net: the persecuting edict published by Decius on his accession (beginning of 250) affected for the first time all the subjects of the Empire and compelled them to offer sacrifice.¹⁶

Coming after the rule of Philip the Arabian, who had been so favourably disposed towards Christianity, this sudden proscription was a terrible awakening for the Christians. At Carthage many fell away:

There were some who did not wait to be apprehended before going up to the Capitol, nor to be interrogated before apostatising. Beaten before the fight, grounded before the assault, many did not even secure for themselves the excuse of seeming to offer sacrifice by compulsion. Of themselves they ran to the Forum, they hastened to (their spiritual) death, as if this had long been their desire and as if they were glad the long-wished-for opportunity had presented itself. How many of the magistrates had to put them off till the morrow, in view of the late hour! How many people begged the magistrates not to defer their deaths. . . . Many were not content to administer death to themselves; they exhorted each other to perdition, they passed from one to another the deadly cup. And to crown all, we have seen children, carried or led by their parents, lose already in their early years what they had received at the threshold of their lives (*De lapsis*, viii-ix).

Others, without sacrificing, purchased a certificate of sacrifice. And what was even more regrettable, confessors themselves took with them into prison the vices of the age:

What punishment do we not deserve, when the confessors themselves, who should give to all an example of good morals, do not conduct themselves as they ought. And thus, because some have allowed themselves to be impudently exalted by the proud and insolent boasting of their confession, tortures have been introduced, not such as are terminated by the executioner, or end with condemnation, or are compensated by death—tortures which do not lead immediately to the crown, but which torment until they overcome, unless the divine goodness brings about amendment in the midst of the tortures, and

¹⁵ *Epist.*, xi, 4.

¹⁶ *Cf. supra*, pp. 791-800.

leads to glory, not by putting an end to the pains but by hastening death.¹⁷

Cyprian's Flight

Cyprian, menaced more than the rest, and realising moreover that his death would have left the Church of Carthage without guidance, had already hidden himself at the beginning of 250, and remained far from the city until the Spring of 251. This withdrawal was wise, but it put him in a difficult position in regard to the confessors, seeing that he who had not himself suffered had to correct those who had. The opponents who had intrigued against him since his election profited by these fresh difficulties: they tried to stir up a conflict, and then to prevent Cyprian from returning to Carthage. Their tactics failed owing to the fidelity of the majority of the Christians: they found themselves isolated, and as it were self-excommunicated. Nevertheless, they succeeded in delaying the bishop's return.¹⁸

Not content with intrigues at Carthage itself, they endeavoured to win the support of Rome. Pope Fabian had died a martyr (January 20th, 250), and the persecution was so violent that for fifteen months it was impossible to elect a successor. During this vacancy in the see, authority was exercised by the priests. Amongst these, the most prominent was Novatian, who, when Cornelius was elected, was to oppose him and make a schism. It seems it was he who, in the name of the Roman Church, replied to the denunciations sent by the priests of Carthage. He wrote at least one of the four letters addressed during these fifteen months by the Church of Rome to the Church of Carthage.¹⁹

At first the Roman clergy, influenced by the evil reports which had come from Carthage, severely condemned the conduct of

¹⁷ *Epist.*, xi, 1. In other letters, Cyprian also rebukes the confessors for pride (*Epist.*, xiii, 4), imprudent relations between men and women (*ibid.*, 5), rivalries and quarrels (5), and insubordination towards priests and deacons (xiv, 3).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, xliii, 1: "The false malignity of certain priests has succeeded in making it impossible for me to come to you before Easter." This whole letter is full of Cyprian's complaints against the deacon Felicissimus and the five priests whom he had previously seen in a vision as accomplices of the persecuting magistrates (3).

¹⁹ On this correspondence, cf. Harnack, *Die Briefe des römischen Klerus aus der Zeit der Sedisvacanz im Jahre 250*, in *Theologische Abhandlungen Carl von Weizsacker gewidmet*, Freiburg, 1892, pp. 1-36; D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-146.

Cyprian. The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep, the hireling abandons them. "We would, very dear brethren, that there should be found among you, not hirelings, but good shepherds" (*Epist.*, viii, 1). The letter did not bear the name either of the one addressed or of the sender. It fell into the hands of Cyprian, who was very much upset by it, and asked the Romans if it were really authentic (*Epist.*, ix); then he proved to them that during his exile he had not lost sight of his flock: "What I have done my letters will show you, letters which I have sent on various occasions, to the number of thirteen, and which I have communicated to you. Counsels to the clergy, exhortations to the confessors, representations to the exiled when necessary, appeals to all the brethren urging them to beg the divine mercy—nothing has been left undone that my humble self could try to do according to the rules of the faith and the fear of God."

When this letter was written the Roman clergy, better informed, judged more fairly the conduct of Cyprian. So far as Rome was concerned, the misunderstanding was cleared up. At Carthage the opposition was not wholly silenced, but the bishop laboured more actively to this end. At first he had been represented in his episcopal city by the priest Rogatianus, but finding that his authority was not sufficiently respected, he constituted a council composed of two bishops, Caldonius and Herculanius, and two priests, Rogatianus and Numidicus,²⁰ and administered his church through these. Eventually, in the Spring of 251, he was able to return.

The Lapsed

He found a very strained situation. The most serious question was that of the apostates, or *lapsi*.²¹ Many Christians had fallen away in the persecution; they did not wait for the judgment of the bishop in order to be reconciled, but tried to impose it upon him. They were supported by the clergy hostile to Cyprian, and in particular by the five priests who had opposed his election to the see, and also by the confessors who had been exercising in their favour an unlimited and imperious right of pardon. In this very delicate situation, Cyprian was careful to act in close union with the African episcopate and with Rome.

²⁰ *Epist.*, xli, 1.

²¹ We shall find the same question at Alexandria: cf. Bk. IV.

His line of conduct had already been clearly indicated in the letters written during his exile. Towards apostates he kept a prudent reserve; to the clergy he gave wise counsels followed by severe warnings (*Epist.*, xvii); to the confessors he gave great praise, mingled with appeals to prudence:

I learn that some by their impudence are bringing pressure to bear on your reserve, and doing violence to it. Accordingly I beg of you, with all the insistence in my power, to remember the Gospel and to think of what was accorded in the past by the martyrs who were your predecessors, and of their circumspection in all things. I ask you also to weigh with care and prudence the desires expressed to you. You are the friends of God, and will one day judge with Him. Judge, then, the acts, the works, the merits of each one; reflect on the nature and quality of the faults, for fear lest, if your promises are inconsiderate and our indulgence excessive, our Church may have to blush before the pagans themselves (*Epist.*, xv, 3).

He was careful to transmit his decisions to the other African bishops (*Epist.*, xxv, xxvi), and to the Roman clergy who were then without a bishop (*Epist.*, xxvii, xxviii, xxx, xxxi, xxxvi). He informed the clergy of Carthage of his representations to Rome, and the reply he received from thence (*Epist.*, xxix, xxxii). These were to be communicated to any bishop or cleric who should desire them. The decision resulting from such deliberation and supported by such high authorities was irrevocable: "It has been decided once for all, both by ourselves and by the confessors and clergy of the city, and by all the bishops residing either in our province or beyond the sea, to change nothing in the status of apostates before we have all gathered together, and by common agreement, without sacrificing either discipline or mercy, come to a definite decision" (*Epist.*, xliiii, 3).

Penance

On his return to Carthage, Cyprian held a Council of the African bishops. Certain decisions were taken, which he explained and commented on shortly afterwards in his *De lapsis*. The *sacrificati*, who had in fact offered sacrifice, were to do penance; they were to be reconciled only at the moment of death. The *libellatici*, who had procured a certificate of sacrifice, were admitted to penance and could be reconciled. Lastly there were some who, without com-

mitting any external fault, had entertained the idea of denial; these ought to confess this to a priest, who would impose on them a suitable penance.²² At the Council of 252 the African bishops, fearing a renewal of persecution in consequence of the edict of Trebonius Gallus, wished to fortify against it all the faithful of good will; accordingly they granted pardon to the apostates who had done penance since their fall (*Epist.*, lvii).

At Rome, Pope Cornelius, elected in March, 251, acted in the same way as Cyprian.²³ But at Rome and at Carthage, some schismatics protested against the steps taken. At Rome Novatian refused all pardon, and gathered around him the rigorists; at Carthage Novatus granted reconciliation to all the apostates.

These two men, holding extreme positions, combined against Cyprian and Cornelius; it was a coalition of rigorism and of laxism in a common manifestation of bitterness and ambition.

The Schism of Novatus

At Carthage, five priests had opposed the election of Cyprian. They persevered in their opposition. The bishop did not wish to expel them from the Church; they withdrew of themselves (*Epist.*, xliii, 1). At their head was the priest Novatus; he ordained as deacon his satellite Felicissimus (*Epist.*, lii, 2), who was to be the most active agent in the schism. During Cyprian's exile this intriguer, abusing his office as a deacon, declared that whosoever should accept aid from Cyprian would be regarded as excommunicated. The bishop had replied: "Let the sentence pronounced by him be applied to himself; let him know that he has withdrawn from our communion" (*Epist.*, xli, 2). As the revolted deacon was endeavouring to attract the apostates by the promise of pardon, Cyprian warned these that, if they went over to the party of Felicissimus, "they will no longer be able to return to the Church, nor to return to the communion of the bishops and people of Jesus Christ" (*Epist.*, xliii, 7). The Council of 251 had confirmed the sentence of excommunication pronounced against the schismatics (*Epist.*, lix, 14). Felicissimus thereupon went to Rome, to seek for support

²² *De lapsis*, xxiii-xxviii. A few months later, Cyprian once more set forth these decisions in his letter to Antonianus (*Epist.*, lv). Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-297.

²³ Letters to Cyprian (*Epist.*, xlix, and 1 in Cyprian's Correspondence, letter to Fabius of Antioch (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii).

there. Cyprian protested against this manœuvre, and wrote to Pope Cornelius to inform him as to the real character of the affair (*Epist.*, lix).²⁴ At the same time he let the excommunicated ones know that they would not be able to force open the doors of the Church: "If there are any who think they can return to the Church, not by prayers but by threats, if they think they can force an entry, not by lamentations and reparations but by terror, these people can be certain that to such the Church of God is shut. The camp of Christ, inaccessible and fortified and defended by God himself, does not yield to threats. The priest of God, holding to the Gospel and keeping the precepts of Christ, may be killed but he cannot be conquered" (*Epist.*, lix, 17).

The Schism of Novatian

While this schism of Felicissimus was gradually developing at Carthage, another schism broke out at Rome, with much more serious consequences.

At the time when St. Cyprian was returning to Carthage,²⁵ the see of Rome had at last a new occupant, St. Cornelius. Fifteen months had elapsed since St. Fabian had suffered martyrdom (January 20th, 250); the hatred of Decius was so violent that, in the words of Cyprian (*Epist.*, lv, 9), "he would rather learn that a rival emperor had been set up against him than see established in Rome a bishop of God." It was in these circumstances that Cornelius was elected: "He sat without fear on the episcopal throne at a time when the tyrant, the enemy of the bishops of God, was giving forth fire and flames" (*ibid.*). But the new Pope was to encounter another opposition, less violent indeed, but more painful than that of the imperial power: the opposition of the schism started and maintained by the priest Novatian.

During the vacancy in the see, Novatian had been the most prominent member of the Roman clergy.²⁶ He was a distinguished writer, to whom we owe a treatise on the Trinity,²⁷ and he had,

²⁴ Cf. also *Epist.*, xlv, 4; lii, 2.

²⁵ Cyprian, hindered by the treacherous malignity of certain priests (*Epist.*, xliii, 1) was not able to return to Carthage before Easter, 251. Easter fell on March 25th; Cornelius was elected Pope at the beginning of March.

²⁶ It was he who had written to Cyprian letter No. 30 in the name of the Roman clergy. Cf. *supra*, p. 848.

²⁷ This treatise has been edited by Fausset, *Novatian's Treatise on the Trinity*, Cambridge, 1909, and translated into English by Herbert Moore (S.P.C.K., 1919). On Novatian and his theology, see D'Alès, *Novatien*, Paris, 1925.

until the day of the election of Cornelius, sworn in the most solemn way that he did not in any way desire the episcopate. "Suddenly," writes Cornelius, "he appeared as a bishop, as if he had been thrown into our midst by a mangonel."²⁸ From the first, the new schism showed itself to be a very violent one; its sudden explosion was followed by an immense conflagration which spread to Italy, Africa, Gaul and the East. "Whereas, by Christ's own institution, there is but one Church spread out in many members in the whole world, and one single episcopate consisting of a great number of bishops united with each other, he in spite of the teaching of God and the unity of the Catholic Church, whose members are united with each other and bound together, has endeavoured to constitute a human Church. He has sent into a great number of cities new apostles of his own choice; . . . and whereas in each city there are bishops regularly ordained, of advanced years and upright faith, faithful in ordeals and proscribed in persecution, he has dared to create above them others, who are false bishops" (*Epist.*, lv, 24). This letter was written in the early months of 252. Novatianism had then been in existence scarcely a year, but it spread rapidly, like Marcionism a century earlier. To use Cyprian's words, it was a human Church in face of the Catholic Church.

At Carthage, the Spring Council (251) was held shortly after Easter, probably in April. The letter in which Pope Cornelius notified his election was received by Cyprian and communicated to the assembly (*Epist.*, xlv, 2). At the same time Cyprian received a letter from Novatian, but refused to read it (*ibid.*). The Council, however, sent two bishops, Caldonius and Fortunatus, to Rome, to gather information concerning the papal election, and it was decided to await their return before definitely taking sides in the dispute (*Epist.*, xlv, 1). This decision was the last word of the Council on the matter.²⁹

²⁸ Letter from Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 7). This letter is very valuable because of the information it gives us on the Church and clergy of Rome at that date. Cf. *supra*, p. 784. As for the accusations Cornelius makes concerning the past life and ordination of his rival, these need not be taken too literally. Otherwise we should have to condemn Pope St. Fabian, who had raised Novatian to the priesthood.

²⁹ This is clear from the incident of Hadrumetum, explained by Cyprian to Cornelius (*Epist.*, xlviii). The priests and deacons, who ruled the church of Hadrumetum in the absence of the bishop Polycarp, had previously addressed their letters to the bishop of Rome, Cornelius; but after Cyprian's visit to Hadrumetum they addressed themselves no longer to Cornelius, but to the priests

Shortly afterwards some envoys came from Novatian, announcing his episcopal consecration. Two bishops, Pompey and Stephen, arrived at the same time, and brought "decisive information and testimonies" (*Epist.*, xlv, 1) in favour of the election of Cornelius. The envoys of Novatian were then definitively dismissed, "refuted, crushed, and convicted of having made a schism" (*ibid.*, 2).

Repulsed by Cyprian, the schismatics did not give up the struggle. They endeavoured to seduce the people, "going from door to door, from place to place, in order to gain recruits for their revolt" (*ibid.*, p. 3). At Rome, Novatian maintained a pitiless penitential discipline towards the apostates, yet he had allied himself with Novatus of Carthage, an upholder of laxism.³⁰ This alliance shows the true character of the schism: if Novatian set himself up against Cornelius, it was less for the sake of a stricter discipline than for his personal ambition.³¹

As we have seen, from the beginning in 252 Cyprian denounced the sending by Novatian of "apostles" into numerous towns, and the creation of false bishops in face of the legitimate ones.

In presence of these practices Cyprian did not remain idle: in Africa he rallied to Pope Cornelius those who hesitated;³² at Rome he intervened in the matter of some confessors who had been led astray into the schism, and whom he very soon had the joy of welcoming back "to their mother, that is, the Catholic Church."³³

and deacons at Rome. Cornelius complained to Cyprian about this; the latter replied that the clergy of Hadrumetum were acting in conformity with the decision of the Council which Cyprian had communicated to them. Cf. Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchungen*, pp. 125 *et seq.*

³⁰ Cornelius (*Epist.*, 1) wrote to tell Cyprian of the presence of Novatus at Rome, and his intrigues with Novatian. Cyprian in his reply (*Epist.*, lii) sets forth in detail the activities of the schismatic priest: at Carthage, Novatus had ordained Felicissimus deacon without the knowledge of the bishop; "as Rome, by reason of its importance, is superior to Carthage, he has committed there more important and graver faults. Here he ordained a deacon against the Church, there he made a bishop." According to this letter, the division between the Roman clergy and the election of Novatian would be imputable mainly to Novatus.

³¹ Before his election, Novatian had anticipated his rigorism (*Epist.*, xxx), but reserved the solution of the case of apostates to the bishop who should be elected. Cf. D'Alès, *Novatien*, pp. 144 *et seq.*

³² See the long letter to Antonianus (*Epist.*, lv), who first attached himself to Cornelius following the information given by Cyprian, but subsequently wavered through the intrigues of Novatian.

³³ *Epist.*, xlvii, 1. Letter xlvii was addressed to the schismatic confessors. Out of respect for the bishop of Rome, Cyprian gave the bearer instructions to hand it to the addressees only if Cornelius judged it fitting (*Epist.*, xlvii).

The Treatise on the Unity of the Church

The schisms which then rent asunder the church of Carthage and that of Rome gave rise to the treatise *On the Unity of the Church*.³⁴ The book had been composed by Cyprian before his return to Carthage; he had made it known to the Council in the Spring of 251 at the same time as his treatise *De lapsis*. The two works were sent to Rome very soon after the election of Pope Cornelius.³⁵

This little work is not a theological treatise, but a pressing exhortation by the Bishop of Carthage to his flock, disturbed by the manoeuvres of Novatus and Felicissimus. The persecution had not yet died down; but Christians ought nevertheless to bear in mind that the persecutor was not their only adversary, and to beware still more of the internal enemy who was cunningly attacking them. The devil, seeing people abandon idolatry and deserting his temples, "has invented heresies and schisms in order to ruin the faith, corrupt the truth, and tear unity asunder." To oppose this devil who is transforming himself into an angel of light, it suffices to return to the source of truth. "Now, the Lord said to Peter: 'I say to thee, thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it; I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' It is upon one that He builds the Church. . . ."³⁶ Can he who is no longer attached

³⁴ On this book and its theology, cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-140; Chapman, *Studies on the Early Papacy*, London, 1928, pp. 28-50; D. Van den Eynde, *La double édition du De Unitate de saint Cyprien*, in *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. XXIX, 1933, pp. 5-24, and on the question specially studied in this last article see Lebreton, *La double édition du De Unitate de saint Cyprien* in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIV, 1934, pp. 456-467.

[The whole question of the two editions of the *De Unitate* has been studied anew, in the light of the manuscript tradition, by Maurice Bevenot, S.J., in a volume in the *Bellarmino Series*, published in 1938.—Tr.]

³⁵ They were sent before letter liv, in which Cyprian tells the reconciled schismatics that they ought to appreciate this work. This succession of facts indicates the destination of the treatise: when Cyprian began it he had in mind, not the schism of Novatian, which had not yet begun, but the schism of Felicissimus. Cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIV, 1934, pp. 457-458.

³⁶ The text which we translate here adds: "After the resurrection, He gave to all the apostles a like power, saying to them: 'As the Father hath sent me, I send you. Receive the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.' Nevertheless, in order to indicate unity, He arranged by his authority that this unity should have its source in one.

to this unity of the Church think himself still attached to the faith? Can he who opposes and resists the Church reckon that he remains in the Church?"³⁷

The bishops have the duty of safeguarding this unity: "The episcopate is one and undivided," and each bishop holds his part conjointly with the rest.³⁸ It is a tree which extends its branches over all the earth, it is a light which shines throughout the world, it is a river whose branches spread fertility everywhere. "But there is only one head, there is only one source, only one mother; it is from her womb that we are born, it is her milk that nourishes us, it is her spirit which animates us."

We see in these fervent affirmations Cyprian's attachment to the unity of the Church, but in these symbols we can also see an anticipation of the various questions which are going to weigh on his mind. Is this possession of the government of the Church by all the bishops conjointly sufficient to safeguard unity? If serious divergences lead some members of the episcopate to oppose others, what authority will be able to impose itself upon all and put an end

Certainly the other apostles were what Peter was, sharing the same honour and the same power, but unity is the starting point, in order to show that the Church of Christ is one. It is this one Church which the Holy Spirit designates in the Cantic of Canticles, saying in the name of Christ: 'my dove, my perfect one is one, she is one for her mother, chosen for her who generated her.'

³⁷ Besides the text which we have just translated, there is another version, itself also attested by early witnesses and by the testimony of important manuscripts. After citing *Matthew* xvi, 18-19, this text continues: "And to the same (Peter) after his resurrection (the Lord) says: 'Feed my sheep.' Upon him He builds the Church, and to him He has given the feeding of his sheep. And although He gives a like power to all the apostles, nevertheless He establishes one single chair, and by his authority He founds the origin and character of unity. The others were what Peter was; but the primacy was given to Peter, to show that the Church is one and that the chair is one. And all are shepherds, but we see that there is only one flock, which all the apostles feed in unanimous accord. Can he who is no longer attached to this unity of the Church think himself still attached to the faith? Can he who abandons the chair of Peter, upon whom the Church was founded, hope to remain in the Church? For the blessed Paul gives us this teaching, and manifests the mystery of unity saying: 'One single body and one single spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.'" On the origin and bearing of these two versions, cf. Bk. IV.

³⁸ We notice these juridical texts: "Ut episcopatum unum atque indivisum probemus"; "episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur" (v). We recognise in this theologian a jurist to whom Roman law is familiar. [I translate "in solidum" as "conjointly with the rest," which seems to be Cyprian's meaning. Dr. Kidd translates: "enjoys full possession," which is the Ciceronian, but not the juridical, sense of the phrase. Cf. p. 871, n. 89.—Tr.]

to the conflict? Already at this date we foresee in the treatise on the Unity of the Church the controversy which will very soon oppose Carthage to Rome, and St. Cyprian to St. Stephen.³⁹

Cyprian and Cornelius

At the time of which we are writing, however, these events were still far off. Some slight misunderstandings might arise between St. Cyprian and St. Cornelius,⁴⁰ but they were soon settled, and between the two great bishops there existed a close concord the memory of which will be perpetuated by the Church of Rome by naming in its diptychs Cyprian side by side with Cornelius. Both of them waged war against Novatian, and this severe struggle was carried on throughout the whole Church. Thirty-five years earlier, the schism of Hippolytus had divided the Roman Church, but it had not extended its ravages outside Rome. Novatian was more enterprising, and truly acted as an antipope. He endeavoured, though in vain, to plead his cause with Dionysius of Alexandria.⁴¹

He at least succeeded in shaking Fabius of Antioch, and in upsetting the East. St. Cornelius had to open the eyes of the bishop of Antioch and bring him back to unity by a vehement letter.⁴²

³⁹ In ch. xi, Cyprian denies the validity of baptism conferred by schismatics (text quoted below, p. 862). And later (ch. xix) he attacks those who neglect the divine tradition and substitute for it a human invention. Similarly in letter xliii, 6: "They reject the commandment of God, and endeavour to establish their own tradition." On the other hand, during the vacancy in the see of Rome, we find Novatian while still a Catholic putting forth this maxim, which six years later will be repeated by Cyprian against Stephen: "Nihil innovandum" (*Epist.*, xxx 8). Cf. D'Alès, *Novatien*, p. 148.

⁴⁰ The incident of Hadrumetum (cf. *supra* p. 853, n. 29) had displeased Cornelius; Cyprian in 252 was upset by the action taken at Rome by the Carthaginian schismatics, and the hearing given them at first by Cornelius (*Epist.*, lix). On this letter, cf. D'Alès, *Cyprien*, pp. 160-163.

⁴¹ The letter of Novatian has not come down to us, but Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlv) gives the reply of Dionysius. It is a model of firmness and of gentleness: "Dionysius to Novatian his brother, health. If as you say you have been led on in spite of yourself, you will show this by returning of your own accord. For all things should have been suffered rather than tear asunder the Church of God. It is not more glorious to undergo martyrdom in order not to adore idols than not to make a schism: indeed, in my opinion the latter is an even greater glory, for in the former case one is a martyr for one's soul only, but in the latter case one is a martyr for the whole Church. . . ." These last words remind us of Cyprian, *De unitate*, xix; it is quite likely that this treatise, which had been sent to Rome, had also reached Alexandria.

⁴² This letter is given by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 5-22. Cf. above, p. 853.

Fabius died shortly afterwards; a Council was assembled at Antioch by Helenus of Tarsus. Dionysius of Alexandria was summoned to it to meet Helenus and the other bishops, and in particular Firmilian of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and Theoctistus of Caesarea in Palestine. In this Council, some "tried to strengthen the schism";⁴³ but they were convinced of their error. Thus the whole East enjoyed once more peace in Catholic unity, and St. Dionysius, the great peacemaker, had the joy of conveying this assurance to Pope St. Stephen.⁴⁴

Stephen and Cyprian

In the West, the aftermath of the great storm still agitated the Church. St. Cornelius died in exile (June 253); his successor, Lucius, was in charge for less than a year: returning to Rome after a short exile, he disappeared in his turn on March 5th, 254, and was replaced by St. Stephen, who was to govern the Church a little more than three years (May 254 till August 257). In his relations with St. Cyprian we find from the first some misunderstandings; very soon a grave conflict broke out.

The first matter which caused a disagreement between the two bishops arose out of the lapse of two Spanish prelates,⁴⁵ Basilides, Bishop of Leon and Astorga, and Martial, Bishop of Merida. These had accepted certificates of apostasy, and were also charged with other grave faults.⁴⁶ As a result, they were once and for all deprived of their sees. Basilides took action at Rome, and succeeded in circumventing and deceiving the Pope. His dismissal, however, was

⁴³ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlvi, 3, following a letter from Dionysius to Cornelius.

⁴⁴ Letter quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 1, ed. Feltoe, p. 41. Further on Dionysius once more gives the Pope his opinion on Novatian: "He has divided the Church; he has drawn aside some of our brethren into impiety and blasphemy; he has introduced an altogether sacrilegious teaching on God; he has very falsely accused our most helpful Lord Jesus Christ of lacking in mercy; and more than all that, he has rejected holy baptism, overthrown the faith and confession which precede it, and completely expelled the Holy Spirit from those who have received Him, although there may be some hope that He remains in them or may return to them." (Letter quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, vii, 6-8.)

⁴⁵ On this matter, cf. Villada, *Historia Ecclesiastica de España*, Vol. I, pp. 185 *et seq.*

⁴⁶ Basilides admitted that he had blasphemed God; Martial had for some time participated in the banquets of a pagan college, and had had his sons buried amongst the pagans.

called for in virtue of the previous decision of "Cornelius our colleague, a peaceful and just man whom God has even deigned to honour with martyrdom: he decided that such men could no doubt be admitted to penance, but they ought to be removed from the clergy and from the episcopal dignity."⁴⁷

In all this, Cyprian was not directly attacking Stephen; he even took care to excuse the Pope's mistake, and to throw the responsibility for it on those who had deceived him. Even so, there was an opposition of judgment between Rome and Carthage, and the eulogy given to Cornelius seems an indirect criticism of his successor. The letter to the two Spanish churches, subscribed by the bishops assembled at the Council in the autumn of 254, must have been written some six months after the election of Stephen, which had taken place on May 12th.

It was in this same year 254 or in the first months of the next year that letter 68 was sent by Cyprian to Stephen. Faustinus, Bishop of Lyons, had several times written to Carthage and the bishops of the province had written to Rome, to denounce Marcian, the Bishop of Arles, for having adhered to the schism of Novatian and accepting the rigorist thesis. Cyprian told the Pope the steps he ought to take:

You ought to write very plainly to our colleagues in the episcopate who are in Gaul, that they no longer allow Marcian, who is obstinate and proud, and an enemy of divine piety and of the salvation of our brethren, to insult our college. . . . Send, then, to Provence and to the faithful of Arles a letter by virtue of which, Marcian being excommunicated, another may be put in his place, so that the flock of Christ which he has dispersed and which is still wounded and diminished may be gathered together once more (*Epist.*, lxviii, 2-3).

These requirements are based upon the duty of pastors towards their sheep, and on the previous decisions of the episcopate, and in particular of Cornelius and Lucius.

Such has always been our attitude to all and in all places. For we could not be of different opinions, we in whom is one Spirit; it is therefore clear that he who has not the same sentiments as the others does not truly possess the Holy Spirit. Let us know who is sent to Arles in

⁴⁷ All these complaints are set forth in letter 67, addressed by Cyprian and thirty-six other bishops to the clergy and faithful of the church of Leon and Astorga and those of the church of Merida.

place of Marcian, so that we may know to whom we are to refer our brethren, and to whom we ourselves are to write (*Ibid.*, 5).

This letter once again shows Cyprian's independence. But at the same time it testifies to the function he attributes to the bishop of Rome. If the Pope is called upon to act, even so it is only he who can so act: neither Faustinus of Lyons nor Cyprian, nor anyone else, can be substituted for the bishop of Rome.⁴⁸ We notice also the affirmation of the unanimity of opinion necessarily brought about by the common possession of the Holy Spirit: this is one of Cyprian's favourite ideas.

Baptism by Heretics

Another matter, much more serious than the foregoing, was to test Cyprian's conception of the unity of the Church, and unfortunately to reveal its insufficiency. This was the question of the validity of baptism conferred by heretics.⁴⁹

This question had presented itself since the end of the second century in many churches. Heresies had been springing up, and the many souls who had been led astray for a time and then were converted to the Catholic Church presented a case of conscience which had to be settled. At Rome the ancient tradition was followed, and it was held that the baptism conferred by heretics might be valid,⁵⁰ and in that case reconciliation consisted in the imposition of hands. In Africa, on the other hand, it was held that

⁴⁸ Was the Pope asked to have a bishop nominated, or to nominate one himself? That is not clear. But we certainly know of examples of episcopal nominations made by the Pope during that period. Cornelius announced to Cyprian (*Epist.*, i, 13-15) that Evaristus, who had passed over to the schism, had been deposed and replaced by Zetus; he also wrote more plainly to Fabius of Antioch (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 10) that he had chosen two bishops in place of those who had consecrated Novatian. Lastly Novatian, who behaved like a bishop of Rome, sent to various churches bishops of his own choice (*Epist.*, lv, 24). Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

⁴⁹ Cf. D'Alès, art. *Baptême des hérétiques*, in *Dictionnaire apologetique*, Vol. I, col. 390-418.

⁵⁰ It was, of course, understood that the formula used had to be that which the Church had received from Our Lord. Accordingly St. Basil criticised St. Dionysius of Alexandria for having allowed the validity of the Montanist baptisms. "How can one accept the baptism of those who baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of Montanus or of Priscilla? Those who have been baptised according to a rite which has not been taught us have not been baptised at all" (*Epist.*, II, clxxxviii).

a heretic could never administer a valid baptism. Tertullian had defended this thesis in his treatise *De baptismo* (xv), and about the same date, at the commencement of the third century, a Council of Carthage presided over by Agrippinus had decided in the same sense. The churches of Phrygia and Northern Syria, involved in the struggle against Montanism, had refused to recognise the baptism of these heretics.⁵¹ It is true that this Montanist baptism was invalid by reason of its form, as the Montanists substituted the name of their prophet for that of the Holy Spirit, and baptised "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of Montanus."⁵² But at that time, when the theology of the sacraments was as yet imperfectly developed, the distinction between the different baptisms by heretics was not always made. Dionysius of Alexandria had even regarded the Montanist baptism as valid,⁵³ and inversely, the Africans rejected all baptisms conferred by heretics, not that the form itself was always invalid, but because the minister was unworthy: not having himself the Holy Spirit, he could not give it to anyone. This reasoning was specious and dangerous, and did not allow for the fact that the grace of the sacrament comes, not from the minister who confers it, but from Christ. It is He who baptises, whether the minister be Peter or Judas. Another African, St. Augustine, will defend this doctrine against the Donatists,⁵⁴ and he will establish it with so much force that no theologian will be able to forget it afterwards. At the time of St. Cyprian, these theological precisions had not yet been made in a definitive manner. Pope Stephen does not employ them, but he invokes tradition.⁵⁵ Cyprian sees in this tradition only an inveterate error, and he wants to correct it: "We must not take refuge behind custom, but conquer this by reason" (*Epist.*, lxxi, 3). Such was the subject of the conflict which for some years was to trouble the Church so deeply.

Already in 251, in his treatise *On the Unity of the Church*

⁵¹ *Epist.*, lxxi, 4; lxxiii, 3; lxxv (letter of Firmilian), 7; Dionysius, letter to Philemon, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, vii, 5.

⁵² Basil, quoted above, p. 704 n. 3.

⁵³ The testimony of St. Basil, quoted above, p. 860, n. 50, is definite. St. Jerome was therefore wrong in putting Dionysius among the adherents of "the doctrine of Cyprian and of the African Synod" (*De viris illustr.*, lxix). In this matter, as in many others, Dionysius seems to have been above all anxious to preserve the peace, even at the price of a very wide tolerance. Cf. Feltoe, *Dionysius*, pp. 40-59.

⁵⁴ *De Baptismo contra Donatistas libri VII: Contra epistolam Petiliani libri III; Contra Cresconium libri IV*; and often in his other works.

⁵⁵ Cf. D'Alès, art. mentioned, col. 415.

(ch. xi), Cyprian had affirmed with great force the African thesis. Speaking of the Carthaginian schismatics, he wrote:

Whereas there can be no other baptism than the one baptism, they think they baptise; they have abandoned the source of life, and promise the grace of the living and saving water. Men are not washed thereby but soiled; sins are not therein effaced but increased. This birth gives sons not to God but to the devil. Those who are born of a falsehood cannot lay claim to the promises of truth.

When he expressed himself in that way, Cyprian had in view only the Carthaginian schism of Felicissimus. But very soon the Novatian schism, spreading from Rome throughout the world, would multiply these baptisms conferred by schismatics,⁵⁶ and the Church would find a good number of these baptised people who had been led astray for a time and then converted, coming back to her. In their case also, Cyprian could not hesitate:

There can be no other baptism than the one baptism.⁵⁷

At Rome, tradition was not in accordance with this view, and the tradition was upheld. This was true not only of Rome but also of Alexandria and Palestine.⁵⁸ In Africa, the decision promulgated by the Council of Carthage presided over by Agrippinus was accepted by the whole episcopate of the Proconsular province and Numidia: Mauretania, less closely attached to Carthage and more open to Roman influence, seems to have followed the traditional usage which Rome had retained.

This opposition could hardly fail to be resented by Cyprian and his entourage. A layman, Magnus, consulted the bishop of Carthage as to the validity of the baptism of the Novatians; the reply was categorical:

⁵⁶ In this question, neither Cyprian nor his contemporaries distinguished between schismatics and heretics.

⁵⁷ There are numerous texts of Cyprian in this sense; they have been collected by D'Alès, *Théologie de saint Cyprien*, p. 230, n. 1.

⁵⁸ On Alexandria, cf. above, p. 861. The Palestinian tradition is implicitly attested by Eusebius. In his account of the baptismal controversy (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, ii, iii *et seq.*), he represents the Roman custom as universally received: "Cyprian, the pastor of the church of Carthage, was the first among his contemporaries to think that only those should be received who had previously been purified from heresy by baptism; but Stephen, holding that nothing should be innovated against the tradition in force from the beginning, was very much upset at that" (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, iii).

Following the opinion inspired in us by the faith of which we are capable, as well as the holiness and truth of the divine Scriptures, we declare that none of the heretics or schismatics has any power, or any right (*Epist.*, lxi, 1).

And after defending his view at length, Cyprian concludes:

I have set forth my opinion: I do not prevent any head of a church from deciding what seems good to him; he will give an account of his conduct to the Lord (*Ibid.*, 17).

The Councils of Carthage

At the autumn Council in 255, in which thirty-one bishops of the Proconsular province took part, Cyprian communicated the replies on the same subject received from eighteen bishops of Numidia to whom the question had been sent. The answer on the part of all was categorical (*Epist.*, lxx). Shortly afterwards, replying to Quintus, a bishop of Mauretania, Cyprian informed him of the foregoing consultation, and emphasised its importance. He expressed his astonishment that other bishops should be of a different opinion. They appealed to custom, but it is reason which should prevail. Peter yielded to Paul: "He taught us not to attach ourselves obstinately to our own opinion, but rather to make our own, when they are in conformity with truth and justice, the good and salutary ideas which may be suggested to us by our brethren and colleagues" (*Epist.*, lxxi, 3).

At the Spring Council of 256, seventy-one bishops of the Proconsular province and Numidia confirmed their former judgment on the baptismal question. They decided in addition that the clerics who returned from heresy to the Church could be admitted only to lay communion. They communicated these decisions to the bishop of Rome, adding: "We do not claim to do violence, or to lay down the law for anyone, each bishop having liberty in the administration of his church, provided he is prepared to give an account of his conduct to the Lord" (*Epist.*, lxxii, 3). The Pope was also sent the two preceding letters. The communicating of these, especially of letter lxxi, which referred to Stephen, must have been very displeasing to the Pope. But Cyprian had only one aim, to bring about the triumph of the truth, cost what it might, and to that end, to make the truth heard.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Cf. D'Alès, *Théologie de saint Cyprien*, p. 190.

About the same date, Cyprian had to answer an enquiry from a Mauretanian bishop, Jubaianus. He sent him the previous documents on the controversy, letters and conciliar decisions, and dealt with some arguments which his correspondent had advanced on the other side. Amongst these there is one the source of which is known to us: it comes from a treatise *De rebaptismate*, written probably by a Mauretanian bishop. It brings forward some rather hazardous considerations which misrepresent rather than maintain the Roman thesis which the author claims to be defending.⁶⁰ Other arguments are taken from an anonymous treatise, possibly of Roman origin.

Throughout these discussions, which often wander away from the point at issue, we realise the warmth of the controversy which had aroused the whole Church, and affected especially that of Africa. The Autumn Council in 256, which met on September 1st at Carthage, was larger than ever. Eighty-seven bishops were there, of whom more than fifty came from the Proconsular province and at least thirty from Numidia; the bishops from Mauretania were very few in number, and we do not know anything about them. The Acts of this council have been preserved.⁶¹ They begin with the allocution of the Bishop of Carthage. Cyprian read the letter of Jubaianus and his own reply, and then added:

It remains for us to express our opinion, one by one, without claiming to judge anyone, or to excommunicate those who may not agree with our view. For no one among us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops, no one tyrannises over his colleagues, nor terrorises them in order to compel their assent, seeing that every bishop is free to exercise his power as he thinks best, and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another. But we must all await the judgment of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom alone it belongs to set us over the government of his Church and to judge our conduct.⁶²

In speaking in this manner to his colleagues in the African episcopate, Cyprian wished to remind them of their independence, and to make it clear that he would not exert any pressure upon them. But it is difficult not to see in his rather strong language a reference to another bishop whose authority, greater still than that

⁶⁰ Cf. D'Alès, *ibid.*

⁶¹ *Sententiae Episcoporum numero lxxxvii de haereticis baptizandis* (ed. Hartel, pp. 435-461).

⁶² See the commentary on this in D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

of the bishop of Carthage, was making itself felt with an insistence which was already disturbing the Africans. In the discussion, the bishop of Rome is mentioned only once, and then in passing,⁶³ but he was present in their minds, and some bishops did not display the reserve which Cyprian himself knew how to keep.⁶⁴

The Roman Reply

As soon as the Pope became aware of these conciliar deliberations,⁶⁵ he sent to Carthage a severe and peremptory letter. The text has not come down to us in its entirety, but Cyprian quotes a portion of it in a letter to Bishop Pompey:

Amongst other things, either haughtily or outside the subject or contradictory, which he has foolishly and imprudently written, he has added this: "If therefore any come to us from the heretics, from whatever sect, let there be no innovation, but let only the tradition be followed, by imposing hands on them to receive them to penance, especially as the heretics themselves do not baptise (again) according to their own particular rite those who come to them from other sects, but merely admit them to communion.

Intervention of Firmilian

The few words of Cyprian we have just read are sufficient to reveal his own feelings. Nevertheless, determined to yield no part of what he considered to be the truth, and finding himself faced by an equally irrevocable decision, he sent one of his deacons, Rogatian, with all the documents of the case, to an Eastern bishop who enjoyed great authority, Firmilian of Caesarea in Cappadocia. Cappadocia, as we have seen, followed the Asiatic custom in the question of baptism, and this was identical with the African usage, and was sanctioned by the Councils of Iconium and Synnada. We may add that Firmilian was a disciple of Origen, strongly attached to the theology of his master, and perhaps resentful of Rome's

⁶³ By Crescentius of Cirta, who mentions Cyprian's letter to Stephen (viii).

⁶⁴ Thus, Therapius of Bulla (lxi): "He who concedes and abandons to heretics the baptism of the Church, is he not a Judas towards the Spouse of Christ?" Zozimus of Tharassa (lvi) recalls the example of Peter: "He at first practised circumcision, then he yielded to Paul who preached the truth."

⁶⁵ He had also received the letter of Cyprian mentioned by Crescentius of Cirta; this is perhaps letter lxxii, or possibly a later one (Bayard, *Saint Cyprien, Correspondance*, II, p. 279, n. 2).

severity towards the Alexandrian doctor. He had in addition a particular grievance against Stephen, in that the Pope had dismissed the Eastern bishops sent to him.⁶⁶ His reply to Cyprian expressed his wholehearted support, and contained a very severe judgment in respect of Stephen, formulated with a violence which Cyprian himself had always managed to avoid.⁶⁷

After comparing the bishop of Rome to Judas (lxxv, 2), he thus challenges him at the end of his letter:

What quarrels and dissensions you have provoked in the churches of the whole world! What great sin have you committed, in withdrawing yourself from so many flocks! For you have withdrawn yourself—do not deceive yourself as to that—if it be true that the real schismatic is the one who puts himself outside the communion and unity of the Church. You thought you could excommunicate the whole world, but you have excommunicated only yourself alone.

Attitude of St. Cyprian

Did the Pope in fact effectively pronounce the excommunication mentioned by Firmilian? The question is an open one.⁶⁸ It seems clear, from letters lxxiv and lxxv, that the rescript which Stephen sent to Carthage contained a formal threat of excommunication;⁶⁹ it is also certain that Cyprian did not submit. But we may hold with great probability that the death of St. Stephen in August 257 prevented any actual sentence. Stephen's successor, Sixtus, was certainly in communion with Cyprian⁷⁰ and the Eastern bishops,⁷¹ and there is nothing to lead us to suspect that this had required absolution or a retractation. Dionysius of Alexandria seems to have acted in this matter in the role of peacemaker which Irenæus had fulfilled in the time of Victor and the Easter controversy.⁷² Here again, Rome was to win the unanimous adhesion of the

⁶⁶ *Epist.*, lxxv, 25.

⁶⁷ This letter, written in Greek, has come down to us in a Latin translation doubtless made by Cyprian himself (*Epist.*, lxxv).

⁶⁸ Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 206, where a bibliography on the question will be found.

⁶⁹ The same threat had been made against the Eastern bishops who rebaptised heretics. See the letter of Dionysius in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 4.

⁷⁰ We see this by the letter in which Cyprian informs his flock of the martyrdom of the Pope, *Epist.*, lxxx, 1.

⁷¹ Letter of Dionysius, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 1.

⁷² Cf. above, p. 724.

churches to its discipline and doctrine, but she found it best to wait for this with a gentle patience.

This question of fact is a serious one, and rather obscure. But the question of doctrine is much more thorny, and more difficult to resolve. How could a bishop so careful for the unity of the Church enter upon and continue in so dangerous an opposition? He did not do so with a light heart; he had to suffer much in consequence; he held to the end without compromise the doctrines which he regarded as certain, but which experience has shown to be inadequate. These doctrines are not easy to interpret, and it has been well pointed out that the divergences in interpretation are due more to the data of the problem than to religious prejudices.⁷³

Amongst these data, in point of fact, some, and these the most apparent, lead the reader towards an episcopalian conception: each bishop is independent in his own sphere; he will render account only to God. We have met with this affirmation in several of the texts quoted in the course of the present chapter; we could quote other examples.⁷⁴

⁷³ This is pointed out by M. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 193: "Koch himself, in his Introduction, divides the critics who preceded him into three groups: those who think that Cyprian explicitly accepted the primacy of jurisdiction in the bishop of Rome; those who regard him as representing a characteristic form of episcopatism, excluding any kind of primacy; lastly, those who, taking an intermediate position, think that Cyprian attributed to the Roman church, if not a primacy of a juridical order, at least the authority of a real centre of unity for the universal Church. Now, Otto Ritschl figures in the first category with Dom Chapman; Ehrhard and Tixeront rub shoulders with Loofs and Benson in the second, and in the third we are surprised to find Hamack associated with Funk and Batiffol."

⁷⁴ See, for instance, the sentence quoted in the text, from the letter to Antonianus (*Epist.*, lv, 21). And again, writing to Cornelius (*Epist.*, lix, 14): "It has been decided by us unanimously . . . that causes should be heard in the place in which the fault was committed; for a portion of the flock has been allotted to each pastor in order that he should guide and rule it, with the responsibility of rendering an account of his conduct to God." To Magnus (*Epist.*, lxxix, 17): "I do not prevent any head of a church from deciding according as he thinks right, provided he is ready to render an account to the Lord of his conduct." To Stephen (*Epist.*, lxxii, 3): "We do not claim to do violence or to lay down the law to anyone, each bishop having complete freedom in the administration of his church, provided he is ready to render account to God for his conduct." To Jubaianus (*Epist.*, lxxiii, 26) "I do not wish to prescribe anything to anyone, nor prevent any bishop from doing as he wills: he has complete freedom of decision." Presidential address to the autumn Council of 256 (*Sent. episcop.*, p. 436): "Every bishop is free to exercise his power as he understands it, and can no more be judged by another bishop than he himself can judge another. . . ." On all these texts and their interpretation, cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 164 *et seq.*

To these texts of Cyprian we may join a Roman text of Novatian, writing

Nevertheless, several of these texts warn us that this independence in each bishop has its limits: this authority may be exercised legitimately only in agreement with the episcopate as a whole: "provided the bond of concord remains, and that indissoluble fidelity to the unity of the Catholic Church continues, each bishop decides his own acts for himself . . . according to his understanding" (*Epist.*, lv, 21). In conformity with this rule, Cyprian does not hesitate to judge and sometimes to condemn the judgments passed by his colleagues.⁷⁵

Tixeront has inferred from these facts that "the actions of Cyprian did not altogether correspond to his theory."⁷⁶ It would perhaps be more exact to say that his theory was not the episcopalianism which some have thought to find in certain of his statements. The independence of each bishop was sacred to him, but always saving the unity of the Church and of its concord. Any bishop who offends gravely against this concord must be brought back to it either willingly or by force. Inside the African province, a council presided over by the bishop of Carthage will see to this unity. But who will assure it in the Church as a whole?

It is clear that for Cyprian the bishop of Rome has here an office of the first importance; it is however equally clear that, according to Cyprian, the Pope's prerogatives are confined to limits which

in the name of the clergy of Rome (*Epist.*, xxx, 1): "Those are worthy of a double praise who, while realising that they should subject their conscience only to God their sole judge, nevertheless desire that their conduct be submitted to the approbation of their brethren."

⁷⁵ In the name of the Council, probably that of the Autumn of 251, Cyprian reprimands Bishop Therapius of Bulla for having reconciled the priest Victor before the expiration of his canonical penance (*Epist.*, lxiv, 1). In this same letter, addressed to Bishop Fidus, Cyprian in the name of the Council gives concerning the baptism of children a decision contrary to the opinion he had himself set forth (*ibid.*, ii). Other similar instances are mentioned by D'Alès (*op. cit.*, pp. 165 *et seq.*). Lastly, some apostate bishops were deposed, and though they wished to return to their sees, the other bishops opposed this. This was the case with Privatus of Lambesa, condemned by a Council of ninety bishops and also by Pope Fabian and Donatus, Bishop of Carthage (*Epist.*, lix, 10), and again with Fortunatianus of Assuras (*Epist.*, lxv, 1).

⁷⁶ *Théologie antémécénne*, pp. 387-388. Tixeront adds: "It has been rightly pointed out that, by centralising in his own hands the government of the African Church and preparing for Carthage the title of primate see, Cyprian had given to his declarations in favour of Rome as the centre of Catholic unity a commentary which was not lost sight of, and which helped to group in an ever more pronounced manner the Christian world around the successor of St. Peter." These remarks are not altogether exact. Cyprian's interventions into other dioceses were not confined merely within the province of Africa.

Stephen himself did not recognise and which the judgment of the Church has definitively set aside. That is the central point in the discussion; let us try to clarify it.

The Roman See is the See of Peter, and the bishops of Rome are the successors of Peter.⁷⁷ Again, Christ willed to found his Church on Peter: that is an evident fact which Cyprian never ceases to affirm.⁷⁸ If at the beginning Jesus willed to found his Church upon Peter and upon him alone, this was in order to make plain, through the unity of the foundation, the unity which ought always to be the essential character of his Church.⁷⁹

Later on, Jesus conferred upon all the apostles the powers which at first he had given to Peter alone. Must we infer from this that Peter had with regard to the others only a privilege of priority, and that his election, preceding their own, had only the value of a symbol in relation to the unity of the Church? Or must we on the contrary regard the Chair of Peter as the permanent foundation of unity?⁸⁰ The reply really admits of no doubt: Cyprian recognises in Peter and his successor, the bishop of Rome, not only a kind of birthright founded upon the chronological priority of Peter's call, but a real primacy. That is implied by the texts,⁸¹ and still more clearly, by facts.

⁷⁷ *Ad Fortun.*, xi; *Epist.*, lv, 8; *Epist.*, lix, 14; cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 121; Firmilian, *Epist.*, lxxv, 17; *ibid.*, 2.

⁷⁸ He affirmed this not only in the first days of his episcopate (*De habitu virginum*, x; *De bono patientiae*, ix; *Epist.*, xliii, 5; *Epist.*, lix, 7; *De unitate ecclesiae*, iv, in its two recensions; *Epist.*, lxvi, 8), but again also at the time of the baptismal quarrel (*Epist.*, lxx, 3; *Epist.*, lxxi, 3; *Epist.* lxxiii, 7 and 11). We find the same affirmation in Firmilian (*Epist.*, lxxv, 16 and 17) and in the *Sententiae episcoporum*, xii (Fortunatus of Thuccabori).

⁷⁹ This thesis is expressly laid down in the *De unitate ecclesiae*, (texts quoted above, pp. 855-857) in its two redactions, but especially in the African redaction (A). Also *Epist.*, lxxiii, 7: "It was first of all to Peter, upon whom He built the Church, and in whom He has established and shown the origin of unity, that the Lord conferred the privilege of seeing unloosed (in heaven) what he would unloose on earth."

⁸⁰ The first interpretation has been defended above all by H. Koch, *Cathedra Petri*, 1930, pp. 32-154; the second by D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-140 and 389-395, and by B. Poschmann, *Ecclesia Principalis*, 1933.

⁸¹ The most explicit text is found in a letter to Cornelius. Speaking of the Carthaginian schismatics who crossed the sea to intrigue in Rome, Cyprian writes: (*Epist.*, lix, 14): ". . . They dare to cross the sea to go to the see of Peter and the principal Church, whence episcopal unity has arisen, and to take there letters from schismatics and profane people. For they do not reflect that these are the same Romans whose faith was praised by the apostle, and to whom misbelief cannot have access." Bayard, in his note on this text, interprets it thus: "In all this passage, St. Cyprian means, if I am not mistaken, that being the

In the year 251, Cyprian was faced first with the Carthaginian schism and then with the Roman schism. When the Roman schism broke out, in his opinion it had an extreme gravity which the Carthaginian schism had never possessed, for it attacked the Catholic Church,⁸² that is, the universal Church.⁸³ This may be explained partly by the rapid propagation of the schism of Novatian, but such explanation is not sufficient: when letter xlv was written, the schism seemed as yet only a local one, and yet already it was denounced by Cyprian as an assault upon the universal Church. That was because it directly affected the Roman church, which is "the womb and root of the Catholic Church."⁸⁴

It is for this reason that the question of the episcopal election at Rome is so grave, and that the Council of Carthage, under the guidance of Cyprian, insisted on taking such great precautions before giving its adhesion to one of the two rival candidates.⁸⁵ It was for the same motive that Cyprian was so greatly angered by the manœuvres at Rome of the Carthaginian schismatics: "They

See of Peter, the Roman Church has continued to be pre-eminently the primary Church, from which all the churches are genealogically derived (cf. *Ad Fortunatum*, xi), and that Christ by the words addressed to Peter founded on Peter first, and on him alone at first, the choice which was to make him the fundamental bond and the type of the unity of the episcopate and of the Church (cf. *Epist.*, lxxiii, 7; *De unitate ecclesiae*, iv). Hence the special importance with regard to unity that he attributes to the church governed by the successor of Peter, though he does not always infer the practical consequences of the premises he lays down, and this is especially true of the present letter."

⁸² This expression, "Catholica ecclesia," appears for the first time in Cyprian in letter xlv, 1, which deals with the Novatian schism. From that date "there is not one letter against Novatian in which the term 'catholicus' does not occur." This remark comes from Koch, *Cathedra Petri*, p. 119.

⁸³ Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, p. 159; *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIV, 1934, p. 459.

[A further discussion of St. Cyprian's attitude towards the Roman See will be found in Bk. IV, from the pen of M. Zeiller.—Tr.]

⁸⁴ *Epist.*, xlviii, 3: ". . . to enable them to go to Rome without meeting any stumbling-block, we exhorted them to recognise there the womb and root of the Catholic Church, and to attach themselves to it." The reference is to the ascertaining of the true bishop of Rome, Cornelius or Novatian. But this has its capital importance only because of the fact that this church is "ecclesiae catholicae matris et radix." This expression echoes what Cyprian says of the original church founded upon Peter: "Mater, origo et radix, quae ecclesias septem postmodum peperit, ipsa prima et una super petram Domini voce fundata" (*Ad Fortunatum*, xi).

⁸⁵ Cyprian explains and justifies these precautions in his letter xlviii to Cornelius.

dare to cross the sea to go to the see of Peter and the principal Church, from which episcopal unity has arisen. . . ." ⁸⁶ He will express the same indignation against Bishop Basilides who tried to win over Pope Stephen to his side. ⁸⁷

This affair of the Spanish bishops and that of Marcian of Arles are very significant. The churches of Leon-Astorga and Merida, which wrote to Carthage, expected from the African bishops only consolation and assistance; from the bishop of Rome Basilides had asked for a judgment. This judgment, in Cyprian's eyes, was null and void because it had been obtained by fraud. But Stephen's right to judge was not called in question. As for Marcian, Cyprian himself called upon the Pope to intervene; he did so in a very categorical manner. But this summons in itself, however imperiously worded, bears witness to the right the exercise of which it requests. ⁸⁸

Does the independence which Cyprian claims for himself in the matter of heretical baptisms mark, then, an inconsistency and change of position, due to the exigencies of the controversy? It does not seem so. Sincere throughout, and deliberate, Cyprian acted as he thought he ought to act. He was not led into error by passion; he was the victim of an incomplete conception of the unity of the Church and of its government. For him, authority belongs conjointly to the episcopal college; ⁸⁹ each bishop shares in it, and individual failings are redressed by the members who compose it. At its head is the bishop of Rome; his chair is the chair of Peter, and the Church of Rome is the *ecclesia principalis*, the source and centre of Catholic unity.

At the same time—and it is here that we find the defect in this theological construction—it does not seem that Cyprian attributed to the bishop of Rome the power to impose definitive and irreformable decisions, whether disciplinary or doctrinal. If the Pope is wrong, he isolates himself from the Catholic community, and the

⁸⁶ *Epist.*, lix, 14; cf. above, p. 869, n. 81.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, lxvii, 5. Cf. above, p. 858.

⁸⁸ On these two matters, cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-184, and above, p. 858.

⁸⁹ "Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur" (De Cath. Eccl. Unit., v). This thesis, fundamental in St. Cyprian's church theory, is set forth in juridical terms which make its meaning clear. Cf. D. O. Casel, *Eine missverständene Stelle Cyprians*, in *Revue Bénédictine*, Vol. XXX, 1913, pp. 413-420, D'Alès, *op. cit.*, 131 *et seq.* [Cf. p. 856, n. 38.—Tr.]

other bishops must by warnings and remonstrances bring him to recognise his error. The supreme judge is not the Pope but the Holy Spirit, acting in the Church and directing it.⁹⁰

The danger involved in this conception is evident, and experience painfully revealed it in the baptismal quarrel. To bring the matter to an issue, Cyprian counted on the collective action of the episcopate, enlightening and assisting the successor of Peter. It was in this spirit that he repeated: "A bishop must not only teach but also learn." While waiting for the light, he acted and fought, without seeming to have envisaged in practice the idea that there is a limit where the individual idea of the Christian ought to abdicate in presence of the personal action of Peter, the first pastor of the Church. The consequences could only be disastrous. The dictatorship of individual opinion, exercised by a man without any higher guarantee, easily becomes tyrannical, and when spread throughout a collectivity, even a collectivity of bishops, it leads fatally to anarchy. The Church of the third century had painful experience of this.⁹¹ Cyprian's error, with its consequences which were so painful for himself, and might have become so fatal for the Church, is to be explained by his hasty training (when yet a neophyte he had been straightway elevated to the highest offices in the Church), by the influence of Tertullian, and by the importance, often excessive, he attributed to private inspiration.⁹² If there was fault on his part, this fault, as St. Augustine⁹³ will remark later on, was gloriously effaced by his martyrdom.

Abatement of the Conflict

This conflict, which brought into opposition against the Church of Rome not only Carthage and Africa but also many churches in the East, was abated through the peacemaking action of St.

⁹⁰ Cf. what Cyprian wrote concerning Marcian of Arles (*Epist.*, lxxviii, 5): "It is manifest that he whom we find thinking differently from the others is not really animated by the Holy Spirit."

⁹¹ D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-222.

⁹² He thought that if the bishops remained docile to this inspiration, they could not fail to live in concord and light. In the midst of the baptismal quarrel, immediately after the Spring Council of 256, he wrote: "I do not wish to prescribe anything to anyone, nor to prevent each bishop from doing as he wishes. . . . We have no quarrels with our colleagues and fellow bishops. . . . With patience and gentleness, we keep the union of souls, the honour of the college, the bond of the faith, and the concord of the episcopate" (*Epist.*, lxxiii, 26).

⁹³ *Epist.*, xciii, 10.

Dionysius of Alexandria, by the patience of the bishop of Rome, St. Sixtus, the "good and peaceful pontiff"⁹⁴ who succeeded Pope St. Stephen (August 257 to August 258), and lastly and above all, through the close union of souls brought about by the persecution of Valerian.⁹⁵ This comprised among its most glorious episodes the confession of the Bishop of Carthage, known to us, so far as his first appearance is concerned, through the proconsular *Acts*, and for his second appearance, through the account which his flock drew up shortly afterwards.

Martyrdom of St. Cyprian

On August 30th, 257, Cyprian was called before the proconsul, Paternus, who communicated to him the order of the emperors to embrace the Roman religion. Cyprian refused, and was condemned to exile at Curubis. The proconsul asked him for the names of his priests; the bishop refused to denounce them, and set out for Curubis. From his place of exile he encouraged the confessors condemned to the mines (*Epist.*, lxxvi). Very soon a new edict was promulgated; Cyprian wrote to Successus about it, and informed him of the martyrdom of St. Sixtus (*Epist.*, lxxx).

The proconsul ordered him to appear at Utica. Cyprian did not wish to go there; he wanted to die at Carthage, in the midst of his own people; he therefore withdrew and explained to the faithful the motives for his conduct in letter lxxxi, the last which we possess. The proconsul returned to Carthage; Cyprian came out from his retreat; the proconsul Galerius Maximus had him taken to the *Ager Sexti*. He was lodged in the house of an officer. A crowd of Christians assembled in the street before the door of the house. Cyprian, always mindful of his duties as a bishop, ordered them to keep watch over the virgins. On the morning of the next day, September 14th, he appeared before the proconsul. After a short interrogation, Galerius "not without sadness" pronounced sentence: "We order that Thascius Cyprianus be put to death by the sword." The bishop said: "Thanks be to God." He was taken to the *Ager Sexti*, accompanied by a great multitude of Christians.

⁹⁴ Such is the description of Sixtus given by Cyprian's deacon and biographer Pontius, *Vita Cypriani*, xiv.

⁹⁵ On this persecution, cf. above, pp. 800-806.

There he took off his mantle, knelt down, and prostrated himself to pray to God. Then he took off his dalmatic, giving it to the deacons, and clothed in a linen undergarment, he awaited the executioner. When the executioner arrived, Cyprian told his people to give him twenty-five gold pieces. The brethren cast down before him clothing and towels. The blessed Cyprian himself bound his own eyes. As he could not tie his own hands, the priest Julian and the subdeacon Julian bound them for him. Thus suffered the blessed Cyprian. In order to remove his body from the curiosity of the Gentiles, it was deposited in a place not far distant; then during the night it was removed, to the accompaniment of torches and chants, to the domain of the procurator Macrobius Candidus on the *Via Mappala*, close to the piscines, in the midst of triumphal enthusiasm.

The death of this bishop, offering himself, assisted by his priests and deacons and surrounded by his whole flock with the same dignity and calm as when he so often offered the Eucharist in their midst, was indeed a triumphal sacrifice. The pagans themselves recognised his ascendancy: the proconsul found it hard to condemn him; the executioner also seems to have hesitated before his task; the martyr, assisted by his clergy, had to bandage his own eyes, and arrange for the binding of his hands. Not one hostile shout came from the crowd. there was nothing but the wonder and veneration of the faithful. We realise how much ground had been gained by the Church in Africa since the martyrdom of St. Perpetua. Or if it is desired to go back still further, let this scene be compared with that of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp. At Smyrna the veneration of the faithful for their bishop was no less, but around them the whole populace was hostile. Between 155 and 258 the Church had won not only attention, but also the respect and sympathy of the people. New crises will still be able to afflict her, but already she has conquered.

THE PAGAN OPPOSITION

§ I. SYNCRETISM¹*The Syrian Emperors and Christianity*

ABOUT the middle of the second century, and in the first half of the third, pagan opinion was drawn towards the East by powerful currents. The attitude of the Roman government and especially of the hellenic world towards Christianity was influenced by this development. In the days of Nero and Domitian, persecutions broke out like violent bursts of rage; pagan opinion supported the imperial severity with all its hatred and contempt for the new sect. Under the Antonines, especially down to the death of Marcus Aurelius, authority persisted in its policy of repression, while the world of letters began to take action, and writers such as Lucian, Fronto and Celsus declared war upon the Church.

From the reign of Commodus (180-182) and especially under the Severi (193-235), this opposition occasionally relaxed, but above all it changed its character. Syrians had invaded the Empire following Julia Domna, whom Septimius Severus made an empress. With her their deity, the sun-god Heliogabalus, triumphed; in his radiance all other cults were expected to fuse together,² and Christianity itself was regarded with a sympathetic curiosity by princes.³

The Life of Apollonius of Tyana

One of the books which best reflects the Syncretism of the time of the Severi is the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*,⁴ written by

¹ Bibliography.—Toutain, *Les cultes païens dans l'Empire romain*, Vol. II, 1911, pp. 227-257.

² This Syncretism had its origin in the oriental religions; its diffusion was due in great part to the imperial functionaries and officers who were attached to these. It spread mainly at the end of the second century and during the first half of the third. "The inscriptions which are dated belong chiefly to the reigns of Marcus Aurelius Commodus, Septimius Severus, Alexander Severus, Gordian and the first half of the third century" (Toutain, *op. cit.*, p. 256). Cf. J. Reville, *La religion à Rome sous les Sévères*, 1886.

³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 751-759.

⁴ Ed. Westermann, Paris, 1849, in collection *Œuvres de Philostrate et Calistrate*, pp. 1-194. French translation by Chassang, Paris, 1862, preceded by a

Philostratus at the request of Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus. Apollonius, who lived in the first century of our era, had left the memory of a Pythagorean philosopher and a magician.⁵ This somewhat vague reputation was transformed in the course of the third century. The magician was celebrated as a thaumaturge, and then venerated as a quasi-deity: Caracalla, Alexander Severus and Aurelian gave him a cultus.⁶ In the work of Philostratus, written at the commencement of the century, Apollonius, if not yet a deity, is already more than a man: his figure is rather shadowy and not easy to distinguish in the brilliant cloud which hides rather than illuminates him. He represents the Pythagorean ideal, clothed in linen, drinking only water, and eating only the fruits of the earth,⁷ rejecting bloody sacrifices, adoring the Sun and offering to it a sacrifice of incense.⁸ He foretells the future,⁹ he expels demons; he works miracles.¹⁰ At the same time he is a great traveller, anxious to learn the wisdom of all peoples. He goes to Babylon, to the Indies, and to Ethiopia. All this romance of travel is closely linked with some apocryphal Acts of apostles, and especially with those of Thomas.¹¹ The narrators alike experience the fascination of the mysterious East, which we find Plotinus trying to penetrate about this time,¹² while Mani was founding his first churches.¹³ The Brahmins, whose wisdom is admired by Apollonius, are praised

useful introduction. But the chronology of the translator should not be followed. He puts the birth of Philostratus "in the reign of Nero," but adds correctly that the Life of Apollonius was written at the request of "the empress Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus" (p. 11, n. 1).

⁵ Lucian criticises him (*Alexander*, v); Apuleius mentions him, apparently, among other magicians (*Apology*, xc), but the text is rather uncertain. In place of *Apollonius*, the Vallette edition (Paris, 1924) has *Apollohex*.

⁶ Caracalla consecrated a *heroon* to him (Dio Cassius, lxxvii, 18); Alexander gave him a place in his *lararium* (*supra*, p. 758); he appeared in a dream to Aurelian and ordered him to spare Tyana; the emperor, who had seen his statue in several temples, obeyed (Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, xxiv, 3).

⁷ *Life*, I, xxxii, 2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I, xxxi, 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, IV, xx and xxv; VI, xxvii.

¹⁰ He transported himself in a moment from Smyrna to Ephesus, and there defeated a demon who was spreading disease (IV, x). He restored life to a young girl thought to be dead; the grateful father gave him the girl's dowry (IV, xlv).

¹¹ Cf. Bk. IV.

¹² Cf. *infra*, p. 880.

¹³ Cf. Bk. IV.

also by Clement of Alexandria;¹⁴ was it not said that his master Pantaenus had visited them?¹⁵ This taste for the marvellous and the far away influenced the popular imagination at that time more than ever. Hence Philostratus and his hero might well appeal to their readers.

As for his religion, this was indeed very shadowy and very poor. Hierocles attempted to set up Apollonius as a rival of Christ,¹⁶ but this was a hazardous opinion which the pagans did not long adhere to. The Pythagorean and his romantic biographer will soon relapse into obscurity, and their interest for us now lies only in their character as witnesses of that far off time and of its dreams.

Characteristics of Syncretism

To the oriental religions and the various forms of Gnosticism which then divided the Roman world, Syncretism offered its protection. It welcomed all the cults into its temple, and combined all the gods in one and the same pantheistic divinity.¹⁷ Christianity

¹⁴ *Strom.*, I, xv, 68, 1; 70, 1; 71, 5; 72, 5; III, vii, 60, 2. See also Numenius, quoted below, p. 878.

¹⁵ Cf. *infra*, p. 894, n. 9.

¹⁶ This attempt on the part of Hierocles is known through its refutation by Eusebius. We notice that according to the testimony of Eusebius himself (*Contra Hieroclem*, 1) that Hierocles was the first who dared to oppose Apollonius to Jesus. Philostratus had been more reserved: "he was clever enough to make no direct reference to Christianity, . . . and merely to suggest conclusions which he nowhere set forth himself" (P. de Labriolle, *La Réaction païenne*, p. 188). We find a refutation of Hierocles in Macarius Magnes, *Apocriticus*, ed. Blondel, pp. 52 and 66. From that date the name of Apollonius of Tyana became hateful to Christians, and remained so for a long time.

¹⁷ Hippolytus has conserved this hymn, chanted to Attis by the faithful: "Whether thou art called the happy son of Chronos, or of Zeus, or of the great Rhea, health, O Attis, name cruel to the heart of Rhea! Thou art called by the Assyrians the most desirable Adonis; all Egypt calls thee Osiris; Greece wisdom, the heavenly crescent of the Moon; Samothrace, the venerable Adam; the Hemonians Corybantes; the Phrygians sometimes Papas, sometimes Corpse, or God, or the Sterile one, or Goat-herd, or the green ear of corn cut down, or the fluteplayer who brought forth the fruitful almond" (*Philos.* V, ix, 8). Irenæus says: "(Simon) taught that it was He who had appeared among the Jews as the Son, had descended at Samaria as the Father, and come to other peoples as the Holy Spirit; He is, according to him, the most sublime Power, that is the Father who is above all things, and He allows himself to be called by every name given him by men" (*Adversus haereses*, I, xxiii, 1). Similarly the Syrian goddess was identified with all the gods; so also Isis (*Apuleius, Metam.*, xi, 1; viii, 25). Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 16 et seq.

could not possibly take part in such a fusion, for its God is the One God.¹⁸

In the persecutions, Syncretism could thus present a new danger for Christianity, and it constituted one in daily life. In this hellenic world which had so long despised Christianity, we begin to find in certain writers advances which might constitute temptations for Christians.

Numenius

Of these writers, the one we know best is Numenius.¹⁹ He lived in the second century, and claimed to follow Pythagoras and Plato, at the same time affirming that "we must consult the most noble nations, and study their initiations, their doctrines and institutions, which are completely in agreement with Plato; such are the Brahmans, the Jews, the magi, and the Egyptians."²⁰ It was Numenius also who said: "What is Plato if not a Moses who speaks Greek?"²¹ He regarded Moses as a man who could influence God by his prayers, but he also thought that the Egyptian priests Jannes and Jambres had by their magical knowledge conjured up the plagues inflicted by Moses.²² He gave an allegorical interpretation of the Jewish prophets, and even of a life of Jesus which he does not name, and these allegories did not altogether displease Origen, who brings them up against Celsus.²³

This philosopher, so benevolent towards the Jews and even to Christians, was absolutely opposed to the sceptics and all the

¹⁸ During the Valerian persecution, in 257, Dionysius of Alexandria appeared before the Prefect of Egypt, Aemilian. Called upon to adore the gods, he replied that he worshipped the one God, Creator of all beings. Aemilian replied: "What then hinders you from adoring him, if he is God, with those who are gods by nature? For you are commanded to adore the gods, and those who are recognised by all." Dionysius replied. "We do not adore any other" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xi, 8-9). (Cf. Feltoe, *Dionysius*, p. 31.)

¹⁹ We have only fragments of his writings, mostly quotations by Eusebius in his *Praeparatio evangelica*. Some others are quoted by Stobeus and Proclus, in *Timaeum*. Clement mentions him (*Strom.*, I, xxii, 150), and also Origen, *Contra Celsum*, I, xv; IV, li. The fragments of Numenius have been collected by Mullach, *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, Vol. III, pp. 152-174, Paris, 1879; the editor has added some comments, pp. 183-4.

²⁰ Quoted by Eusebius, *Praep. evang.*, IX, vii. *Fragm.*, p. 165.

²¹ Eusebius, *Praep. evang.*, XI, x; Clement, *Strom.*, I, xxii, 150, 4. *Fragm.*, p. 166.

²² *Ibid.*, IX, viii. *Fragm.*, p. 165.

²³ *Contra Celsum*, I, xv; IV, li.

philosophers of the New Academy, Arcesilas,²⁴ Carneades²⁵ and the rest. He worked out a religious philosophy: the divinity is immaterial; ²⁶ he recognises a first god, who is simple, the second and the third are one. The first is father, the second is the demiurge. One can liken the first to the farmer, and the second to the labourer who plants. The first scatters the seeds of all souls; the second arranges and distributes these seeds. The second proceeds from the first like a torch which is lit from another.²⁷

It is difficult to derive from these statements of Eusebius a definite and precise idea. But at any rate we can distinguish without difficulty a Christian and a Gnostic influence. The comparison of the torch was a classic one in the apologists; ²⁸ the identification of the second god with the Demiurge had been made by Basilides and Marcion.²⁹ Last but not least, the thesis so willingly adopted of the identity of the doctrines of Moses and Plato rejoins the affirmations of the apologists concerning the plagiarisms of the Greeks. This concession was bound to lead to a vigorous reaction on the part of the strict adherents of hellenism.

§ 2. NEOPLATONISM¹

Plotinus

The centre of this reaction was the Neoplatonist school. Founded at the beginning of the third century by Ammonius Saccas, this school was to benefit by Plotinus and his doctrine, and then to produce in the person of Porphyry the bitterest opponent of the Christians.

²⁴ Eusebius, *Praep. evang.*, XIV, vi. *Fragm.*, pp. 155-158.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, XIV, viii. *Fragm.*, pp. 161-163. Eusebius, however, regards him as "a robber and a liar cleverer than Arcesilas."

²⁶ *Ibid.*, XI, x. *Fragm.*, pp. 166-167.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, XI, xviii. *Fragm.*, pp. 167-170.

²⁸ Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 569.

²⁹ Cf. above, pp. 625, 643.

¹ Bibliography.—C. Schmidt, *Plotins Stellung zum Gnosticismus und kirchlichen Christentum*, Leipzig, 1901 (*Texte und Untersuchungen*, XX, 4); Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, Ghent, 1913. The chief work for the period we are considering here is the treatise of Plotinus "Against those who say that the demiurge of the world is wicked, and that the world is evil" (*Enn.*, II, ix). The work in fifteen books composed by Porphyry against the Christians is lost; we know some of his arguments through the refutation by Macarius Magnes, ed. Blondel, Paris, 1876. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *La Réaction païenne*, Paris, 1934, pp. 223-296.

The antagonism which usually² existed between the two doctrines and their adherents was not apparent in the very early years of Neo-Platonism. Origen attended the lectures of Ammonius, and Porphyry reproached him later on for having deserted hellenism, and living according to Christian laws while continuing to think as a Greek.³ We shall return later on to this passage of Porphyry, and point out its errors and injustice. It interests us now mainly as a reminder of the time when Ammonius and Origen worked together; it also makes us realise what a redoubtable adversary Neoplatonism recognised in the Christian master of Alexandria.⁴

Origen had already left Alexandria when Plotinus arrived there, about 233.⁵ He listened to various masters there, but none satisfied him. A friend took him to Ammonius. "Here is the man I have been looking for," cried Plotinus, and he attended his lectures for eleven years. In 244, on the death of Ammonius, desiring to study the philosophy taught in Persia and the Indies, he followed the emperor Gordian who was setting out on an expedition against the Persians. This expedition ended in disaster: Plotinus escaped with great difficulty, first to Antioch, and then to Rome, where he stayed; he was then forty years old. That was in the first year of the reign of Philip the Arabian (244-249). Plotinus found once more at Rome the Christian Church which he had come to know at Alexandria. It enjoyed the complete favour of the emperor, and its bishop was so powerful that Decius said after the martyrdom of Fabian in 250 that he would rather tolerate at Rome a pretender to the Empire than a bishop of the Christians.⁶ We have already spoken of the terrible persecution by which the new emperor tried then to destroy this Church which he found so formidable.⁷

It was amid these tempests that the school of Plotinus came into

² This opposition never prevented contacts nor even borrowings: it is enough to recall here Marius Victorinus in the West, and in the East pseudo-Dionysius; and the Neoplatonists, as much as and even more than Christians, borrowed from their opponents. These borrowings are particularly evident in Proclus, for instance in his angelology and in his theology of prayer.

³ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 7, Cf. Bk. IV.

⁴ Origen was not the only Christian among those who heard Ammonius: he had been preceded by Heraclas (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 13). Cf. Bk. IV.

⁵ Plotinus was born at Lycopolis (Assiut) about 205; he was 28 years old when he went to study at Alexandria. Cf. his *Life* by Porphyry, ii-iii.

⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 852.

⁷ Cf. *supra*, pp. 791 *et seq.*

existence at Rome. The master was not a persecutor,⁸ but he was a fervent adherent of hellenism; in the bitter struggle which was going on around him he considered that he had a part to play, and was conscious of its importance. For the rest, philosophy was not for him pure speculation: the religious enthusiasm with which he had given himself up to Ammonius had increased in the course of his meditations and his teaching; he regarded himself, like the initiates into the Mysteries, as the depositary of a secret. For a long time he refused to make known the teachings of his master; when other disciples of Ammonius violated the secret to which all had bound themselves, Plotinus regarded himself as freed from his promise,⁹ and shortly afterwards he began to write. Even so, at that moment his compositions made no pretence at literary form, and were merely scholastic discussions communicated to a few confidants.¹⁰ He aimed at a sort of ideal city, a Platonopolis, which he hoped to found in Campania thanks to the support of the emperor Gallienus and his wife Salonina.¹¹

The Treatise Against the Gnostics

Nevertheless Plotinus realised that his authority was opposed, even within his own circle, by rival influences. Some contrasted him with Numenius, even accusing him of having plagiarised this writer;¹² others were Christians, "sectaries who had departed from the ancient philosophy." "They have deceived many people, because they have deceived themselves, and think that Plato did not penetrate completely to the intelligible essence. Plotinus refuted them often in his lectures, and wrote a treatise which I have called *Against the Gnostics*; he left us the rest to examine."¹³

⁸ Schmidt (*op. cit.*, p. 12) even thinks that Gallienus's edict of toleration and his letter to the Egyptian bishops were due to the influence of Plotinus, but this seems a gratuitous supposition.

⁹ *Vita Plotini*, iii.

¹⁰ "In the tenth year of Gallienus (264), when I became acquainted with him, he had written twenty-one works. I possessed these treatises, which were entrusted only to a small number of people; it was not then easy to get these entrusted to one, or to find out about them; it was neither simple nor easy, and the receivers of the books were carefully chosen" (*Vita*, iv).

¹¹ *Vita*, v.

¹² Amelius replied to them in a work on *The Difference between the doctrines of Plotinus and of Numenius* (*Vita*, xvii).

¹³ *Vita*, xvi. These sectaries, who were Gnostics, relied on many writings, and in particular on apocalypses; Porphyry replied to the *Apocalypse* of Zoroaster. Cf. *infra*, p. 887, n. 20.

This treatise of Plotinus is a most important document for the religious history of the third century. No other work brings out so plainly the antagonism between hellenism and Christianity. True, the Christianity which Plotinus here attacks is mingled with a Gnostic mythology which the Church has always rejected; but what the philosopher rejects with most force are not the imaginations and magical rites of the Gnostics but their conception of the world, of man, and salvation, and in its essential features this conception is a Christian one.¹⁴

The opponents Plotinus had in mind had adhered to Gnostic doctrines before coming to hear his lectures. He was not able to detach them from these doctrines, to his very great regret. "But it is to my own disciples and not to those others that I address these discourses" (x, 8). These latter make use of the books of ancient writers, and especially of Plato, without understanding them:

Coming after the ancients, they have taken from them many things, but have made unseemly additions, in order to contradict them; they ascribe to the Intelligible generations and corruptions of every kind; they condemn the visible universe; they regard the union of soul and body as a fault; they criticise the Governor of the universe, they identify the Demiurge with the soul, and attribute to it the same passions as those of individual souls (vi, 55).

Their imaginings are words devoid of meaning; "they are inventions of people who are not attached to the old hellenic culture" (vi, 6).

Leaving aside those features which are specially Gnostic,¹⁵ we notice above all the idea of the world, its unity, and its origin.

¹⁴ This is pointed out by E. Bréhier in his edition of the *Enneades*, II, p. 108: "For the rest, what Plotinus criticises above all in them (the Gnostics) is the fundamentally anti-hellenic character of their teaching, and, we might say, its Christian character." He concludes by insisting (pp. 109-110) on the bearing of this controversy: "This treatise has therefore a profound significance which in interest greatly surpasses the historical occasion which gave rise to it. It is one of the finest and proudest protests on the part of hellenic rationalism against the religious individualism which at that time was invading the greco-roman world . . ." We are unable to subscribe to this eulogy, but we ourselves regard this treatise of Plotinus as manifesting the reaction of hellenism against Christianity.

¹⁵ The emanations are not such as they imagine them to be, but necessary and eternal (iii); their idea of the fall of the soul cannot be sustained (iv, x), the same is true of their magic (xiv), and their conception of illumination in darkness (xii).

"This world did not begin, and will not end" (vii, 1). "To ask why the world was made is to ask why there is a soul, or why the Demiurge produces. It thus amounts to positing a beginning of that which has always been, and then to think that he became the cause of his work, after himself changing and undergoing modifications" (viii, 1). The visible world is not to be despised; it is the one image, as perfect as may be, of the intelligible world.¹⁶

The most beautiful and most divine things in this visible world are the stars; to deny the intelligence of the sun is a manifest absurdity (v, 1-15). "Why attribute to ourselves a wisdom higher than theirs? How admit this, without being fools?" (viii, 38). "The souls of the stars have much more intelligence and goodness, and closer contact with the intelligible realities than our own" (xvi, 9). "There are people who do not object to calling brethren the most vile of mankind, but they will not deign to give this name to the sun, or the stars in the heavens, or even to the soul of the world" (xviii, 17; cf. xxxvii).

Also, from the moral point of view, this world is good. There are certainly defects in it, but a wise man knows how to deal with these:

One man is a murderer, another, through frailty, is overcome by pleasure: there is nothing astonishing in these faults, which arise not from intelligence, but in childish and puerile souls. If there is a struggle, and if there are conquerors, is it not plain that this is very good? If someone does wrong to you, is this terrible for the immortal part of your being? Another murders you: but that is precisely what you would wish. Moreover, if you complain so much of this world, you are not obliged to remain a citizen of it (ix, 11-17).

To these commonplaces of Stoicism, Plotinus adds the theory of previous existences: "The gods, as it has been said, will be easily acquitted by men . . . since they give to each one, in the alter-

¹⁶ "Again, it cannot be allowed that this world is an evil production because it contains many things which go wrong; that would be to give too high a value to it, and to think that it is identical with the intelligible world, whereas it is only an image of it. And what image could be more beautiful? What other fire than ours could be a better image of the intelligible fire? And after the intelligible earth, is there an earth superior to ours? Is there a more perfect sphere, endowed with a more regular movement, apart from the extension of the intelligible world in itself? Is there, after the intelligible sun, anything superior to the visible sun?" (iv, 22). Cf. viii, 16, xvi, 1; xvii, 1.

nating succession of his lives, the destiny which is fitting for him and which is the result of his previous lives" (*Ibid.*, 22-25).

The multiplicity of deities contributes to the beauty of this universe:

After the happy soul, we must celebrate the intelligible gods, and above them all, the great king of the intelligible beings, whose greatness is manifested even by the plurality of the gods. As the Divinity is not restricted to one only being, but is shown to be as multiple as God effectively manifests to us, we come to know the power of God, which, while remaining identical with itself, is capable of producing the manifold deities who are connected with Him, exist by Him, and come from Him (*Ibid.*, 32-39).

In presence of all these beings which are superior to us, we must not dream of privileged relations with God, but just keep in our own place:

This visible world is likewise made by God and looks towards Him, as do all the gods, which all make known to man, by prophecy and oracle, that which has affinity with them. That they are not the supreme God himself is of course quite obvious, but if you are going to despise them, or boast of not being inferior to them, I will say to you, in the first place, that the better anyone is, the more benevolent he is towards all beings, and towards all men. Moreover, we must consider ourselves with moderation, without grossness, and without raising ourselves higher than our nature can put us. We must realise that there is room for others near to God; we must not put only ourselves next to Him, or by approaching to Him in a dream, deprive ourselves of becoming divine so far as this is possible for a human soul. This is possible to a soul in the measure in which it is guided by intelligence; to go beyond intelligence is to cause it to fall. . . . Great is the presumption of men, though previously humble, modest and ordinary layfolk, when they hear it said: "Thou art a son of God; the others, whom thou hast admired so much, are not sons of God, not even the stars which have been traditionally honoured; thou art thyself, without effort, superior even to the heavens." And then the others applaud (*Ibid.*, 39-60).

Such men think themselves to be the object of a special providence, and forget that Providence is universal and extends to all beings:

If God exerts his providence in your favour, why should He neglect the world as a whole, in which you are? . . . You will perhaps say

that men do not need that God should have regard to the world. Perhaps not—but the world has need of God. . . . (*Ibid.*, 64-70).

Can the denial that Providence extends to this world and to all things be reconciled with piety? Is one who denies it consistent with himself? For they maintain that Providence is exerted solely in their favour: was this when they were up above, or now that they are down here? In the former case, how is it they have come down here? In the latter case, how is it that they remain here below? How is it that God himself is not here below? If He is not here, how does He know that they are here? How does He know whether in their stay here below they have not forgotten Him or whether they have not become wicked? . . . (xvi, 14-22).

Whether Providence extends in fact from below to yourselves, or whether it is as you think, the world contains in any case something which comes from God; it has not been abandoned by Him and never will be. Providence watches over the whole, even more than over the parts, and the soul of the whole shares in it more than others; this is proved by the fact of existence, and of existence accompanied by wisdom. Has one of these foolish men, who think themselves to be above wisdom, the beautiful regularity and wisdom of the universe? Such a comparison is ridiculous and out of place, and if it were not required by the discussion, one would not be exempt from impiety (*Ibid.*, 27-36).

A last reproach, but not the least serious, was that Christians have no moral science:

They have no doctrine concerning virtue; they have left this matter wholly on one side; they do not say what it is, nor how many virtues there are; they are ignorant of the studies of the ancients, so numerous and so beautiful; they do not show how one acquires virtue, how one possesses it, and how one cures and purifies the soul. It is quite superfluous to say: "Look towards God," if they do not teach how we are to look. For someone might say: "What is there to prevent us looking towards God without abstaining from any pleasure and without repressing anger? What is there to prevent us always recurring to the name of God, while remaining governed by the passions, and making no attempt to be free from them?" It is the progress of virtue within the soul, accompanied by prudence, that enables us to see God: without true virtue, God is but a word (xv, 28-40).

The opposition between the two philosophies is thus summed up by Plotinus:

The philosophy which we aim at makes manifest with all other goods, the simplicity of morals and the purity of thoughts; it aims at gravity and not arrogance, the confidence it engenders in ourselves is accompanied by reason, assurance, and also by prudence and an extreme circumspection. The other doctrine is set forward in complete opposition to ours. And I do not wish to speak of it any more (xiv, 38-45).

This treatise, which we can date in the year 264,¹⁷ is not the only one which manifests polemical preoccupations;¹⁸ but nowhere else do they dominate a whole treatise as they do here, and it is this that gives this work its unusual interest. No other document of this period throws so strong a light on the conflict between Christianity and hellenism. This whole period is so far removed from us in time that, if we read only the Christian writers, we fail to understand the force of the opposition these had to encounter, not only from the statesmen and people in general, but even from the most distinguished and most reflective minds. This religion of the world, the sun, and stars, which Julian will do his best to revive a century later, will then be exhausted and collapse upon him with all its weight, but in 260 in the time of Plotinus, it was still living and powerful. The world was regarded as full of gods, who are taught by tradition, recognised by philosophers, and sincerely revered by pious pagans. To regard oneself as the object of a special providence of God, or as his child, more dear to Him than the sun and the stars, was for Plotinus an absurdity which does not even admit of discussion.¹⁹ And then these common folk, who come from the people, and have never studied ethics, lay claim to virtue, and think that prayer and the love of God suffice for it!

When Plotinus waxed so indignant, some twenty years had passed since Origen had answered Celsus. His reply did not affect Plotinus; the latter knew Christianity only as deformed by Gnos-

¹⁷ Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁸ Traces are to be found in *Enn.*, II, 1, 4, 14-33; III, vii, 13, 49-53; III, ii, 8, 20-41; III, ii, 9, 10-19. Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-81. On the common attacks against Gnostics and Christians, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 82 *et seq.*

¹⁹ To rebut Plotinus, it suffices to repeat the statement of St. John of the Cross: "One single human thought is worth more than the whole world; hence only God can be worthy of it" (*Aphorisms*, ed. Baruzzi, pp. 16-17).

ticism, just as in the next century Julian saw it only through Arianism.²⁰

Porphyry

Plotinus was content to point out the fundamental opposition between hellenic thought and Christian gnosis: Porphyry was to renew the fight and to carry it on to the bitter end.²¹

Was Porphyry born in Christian circles? The historian Socrates says so, but it is very doubtful if he is right.²² What is certain is merely that, being born or at least brought up at Tyre,²³ he met Origen²⁴ when a young man, and was acquainted with Christianity, then very flourishing on the Phœnician coast. His curiosity, which was very great, was directed towards all the oriental religions which were at that time springing up around him;²⁵ Christianity seems also to have attracted him, and it was possibly for some time the subject of his sympathetic study.²⁶

But all this quickly vanished; at the end of 249, Philip the Arabian was killed by Decius, and the imperial favour was succeeded by persecution. War was declared between the two sides,

²⁰ Plotinus was not content merely to write against the Gnostics himself; he directed the labours of his disciples in the same sense: "He left us," says Porphyry, "the rest to examine. Amelius wrote as many as forty books against the book of Zostrienus. I myself made numerous criticisms of the book of Zoroaster; I showed that it was a recent apocryphal work, fabricated by the founders of the sect in order to persuade people that the doctrines they were advancing were really those of the ancient Zoroaster" (*Vita*, xvi).

²¹ Cf. J. Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, Ghent, 1913; P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, pp. 231-296.

²² Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*, III, xxiii, 37. Cf. Bidez, *op. cit.*, p. 7, P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

²³ In 232-233.

²⁴ Origen himself says so in a text quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 5.

²⁵ "He liked to speak the idiom of his country, and perhaps prided himself on understanding Hebrew. He was versed in the mystenes of Chaldea, Persia and Egypt. We find him describing and interpreting a hieroglyph, and dealing with the sacred and profane literature of the Jews and the Phœnicians. India itself had attracted his curiosity, and he was the one consulted in order to prove the non-authentic character of certain Gnostic writings put forth under the name of Zoroaster" (Bidez, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10).

²⁶ Bidez writes, though not without some exaggeration (*op. cit.*, p. 13): "His gentle and delicate nature could not fail to be attracted by the nobility and infinite goodness of the words of Jesus; he realised their beauty, just as he understood the greatness of the Bible. For a long while he retained a sincere veneration for the person of Christ."

and Porphyry openly sided with the Empire and its gods. He was still young when he wrote his *Treatise on the Oracles*, in which Geffcken finds "the most abominable superstition."²⁷ He did not only write: he tells us that one day he expelled from a bath a demon called Causatha by the people of the neighbourhood.²⁸

In 263, when thirty years old, Porphyry was at Rome, and there joined himself to Plotinus. This connection had a decisive influence on his life and thought. We recall the attraction which the Platonist philosophy had for Justin: "The understanding of incorporeal things captivated me very greatly, the contemplation of the ideas gave wings to my thought; after a little while I thought I had become a wise man; I was even foolish enough to hope that I was going immediately to see God, for such is the aim of the philosophy of Plato" (*Dial.*, ii, 6).

These religious aspirations were still more pressing in the school of Plotinus, and as a result of his contact with it, Porphyry himself writes as follows in the *Life* of his master:

Thanks to this daemonic illumination, which often ascends through the Intelligence up to the first god and beyond, following the method laid down by Plato in his Banquet, Plotinus saw God, who has neither form nor essence because He is beyond the intelligence and the intelligible. This God I for my part approached and became united with only once, when I was in my sixty-eighth year. But Plotinus had a very close vision of the end. For him, the end was the intimate union with the God who is above all things. While I was with him, he four times attained this end, thanks to an ineffable act, and not in potency. The oracle says that often the gods straighten one's straying path, in order to enable us to see the radiance of their light.²⁹

This ardent tension exhausted the nervous energy of Porphyry. He contemplated suicide. Plotinus, in whose house he lodged, perceived this. "He told me that my desire to commit suicide was in no way reasonable, but resulted from an unhealthy melancholia, and urged me to travel" (*Ibid.*, xi). That was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Gallienus, in 268 (*Ibid.*, vi). Porphyry withdrew to Lilybaeum in Sicily. He never saw Plotinus again, but the

²⁷ *Ausgang des Heidentums*, p. 59, quoted by P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 233. This judgment may be confirmed by reading the chapter which Bidez devotes to this treatise, and the fragments he quotes from it (*op. cit.*, pp. 17-28).

²⁸ Bidez, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

²⁹ *Life of Plotinus*, xxiii.

latter continued to send him the rest of his *Enneades* (*Ibid.*, vi). In 270, Plotinus died. Longinus the rhetorician, who had previously been Plotinus's master, left Athens, which had just been pillaged by the Goths, and went to Palmyra, to Queen Zenobia. He asked Porphyry to go to him, requesting him to bring books with him (*Ibid.*, xix). Porphyry remained in Sicily, and in 272, Aurelian, who had vanquished Zenobia, had her advisers executed, among them being Longinus.

In Sicily, Porphyry gradually recovered from his neurasthenia. Meanwhile he occupied his time in popularising philosophy, and especially Aristotle's Logic.³⁰ Very soon he returned to the anti-Christian polemics in which Plotinus had involved him. Aurelian on his return from the East contemplated introducing into Rome the cult of the Sun and making it the sole religion of the whole Empire. In 274 he built on the Quirinal a magnificent temple to the "Invincible Sun." It was in these circumstances that Porphyry wrote his fifteen books *Against the Christians*.³¹

The Work Against the Christians

In the fourth and fifth centuries, this work was on several occasions proscribed by the Christian emperors. It perished, but only after it had long moved public opinion. It was answered by Method of Olympus, Eusebius, Apollinarius of Laodicea, and by Macarius Magnes. The work of the last-mentioned is the only one which has come down to us, and even this is incomplete.³² The discussion by Macarius Magnes is our best source for the arguments put forward by Porphyry.³³

³⁰ "Chrysaorios, a senator to whom he had previously given lessons in Rome, tried one day to read Aristotle's *Categories*, but he could not understand them at all. In his difficulty he wrote to Porphyry," who composed the *Isagoge*. This little treatise was to make Porphyry's reputation. Cf. Bidez, *op. cit.*, pp. 60 *et seq.*

³¹ Bidez, *op. cit.*, p. 67; P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

³² *Macarii Magnetis quae supersunt ex inedito codice*, edidit C. Blondel, Paris, 1876. The work comprised five books; the manuscript edited by Blondel began with ch. 7 of Book II, and ended suddenly in the middle of a word, in ch. 30 (the last) of Book IV.

[An English translation, with introduction by T. W. Crafer, D.D., was published in the *Translations of Christian Literature* by the S.P.C.K. in 1919. It includes a short passage from Book V.—Tr.]

³³ The fragments of Porphyry have been collected by Harnack, *Porphyrius gegen die Christen*, 15 *Bücher, Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate*, in *Abhandlungen* of the Berlin Academy, 1916. To these must be added five Fragments

This reasoning is quite different in character from that of Plotinus; it is not now the defence of a philosophical thesis, but a philological or historical controversy. We see here the influence of Longinus even more than that of Plotinus. The account of the Passion makes Porphyry angry, as it did Celsus.³⁴ Like the Pharisees, he demands great public miracles.³⁵ Above all, he emphasises the divergences in the Gospel narratives.³⁶ Often his objections are only quibbles, but sometimes he calls attention to real difficulties.³⁷

This controversy is related to that which the Marcionites were then waging against the Old Testament. It might be troublesome, but was not decisive, and threw no light on the question it discussed.

Porphyry had a sharp but not very powerful mind, and has left the memory of a determined and clever controversialist, but his influence, in contrast to that of Plotinus, was purely negative.³⁸ After his time, the Neo-Platonist school continued its speculations, and also its mystical efforts and its theurgy. With Jamblichus and, above all, Proclus, it was influenced by Christianity on more than one point, and at the same time reacted upon Christianity, as we see in the work of pseudo-Dionysius. As for the effort of Aurelian to group all the forces of hellenism in the cult of the *Sol invictus*, this will be taken up again a century later by Julian the Apostate.

transcribed by Feuardent in his edition of Irenæus, III, iii, 4 (Migne, P.G., Vol. V, col. 1925; Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. II, 3, pp. 421-422; Funk-Diekmamp, PP. *Apostolici*, Vol. VII, 1913, pp. 377-401).

³⁴ Macarius Magnes, III, i.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, III, xviii.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, II, xii.

³⁷ Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-270.

³⁸ On the letter to Marcella, cf. A. Bremond, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIII, 1933, pp. 106-112.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL AT ALEXANDRIA BEFORE ORIGEN¹

§ I. THE BEGINNINGS

Alexandria

IN THE first centuries of the Christian era, Alexandria was one of the greatest cities of the Empire, and a rival to Rome and Antioch. Of recent foundation, and consequently without traditions, it was the centre of hellenic commerce in the Mediterranean, and also the open door to that mysterious country of Egypt, whose age-long traditions had such an attraction for the Greek mind. By reason of the mildness of its climate it attracted a distinguished colony; sufferers from phthisis went there to seek health; others, much more numerous, were attracted by the life of pleasure its inhabitants led.²

On the confines of two civilisations, Alexandria united hellenic elegance with Egyptian mystery. Even to-day, in the few monuments which remain of the old city, one is surprised to find a combination of Greek and Egyptian art which is not to be found elsewhere.³

In this cosmopolitan city, in which life was so pleasant, all the cults seemed to be combined in a complaisant Syncretism, and a visitor found there nought but toleration and freedom.⁴

¹ Bibliography.—C. Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, Oxford, 1886; W. Bousset, *Jüdisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom*, Göttingen, 1915.

² Celsus, *De re medica*, III, 22; Pliny, *Epist.*, V, 19; Leclercq, article *Alexandrie* in *Dict. d'Archéologie chrét.*, col. 1101.

³ This is particularly the case in the catacomb of Kom-el-Chougafa, in which we find Anubis, the Egyptian god with the head of a jackal, placed on a tomb and surrounded by hellenic garlands. If we ascend the Nile valley, we no longer find, even in the monuments of the Ptolemaic and Roman period, any like traces of Greek influence.

⁴ Cf. the letter of the Emperor Hadrian to Servianus (*Hist. Aug., Saturninus*, VIII, 11). The authenticity of this letter is disputed, but seems very probable. The emperor describes with contemptuous irony the versatility of the Alexandrians: "the patriarch of the Jews, when he came to Alexandria, found himself

But beneath this apparent toleration there slept violent passions. In 216, when Origen was a young man, a riot broke out. Caracalla summoned the populace to the gymnasium, caused the strong men to be enrolled for military service, and then had them massacred; he lodged his soldiers with the inhabitants with orders to kill their hosts, and this was carried out.⁵ In 249, in the reign of Philip the Arabian, a prince who was nevertheless very favourably disposed to Christians, a riot led to a rising of the whole populace against the Christians, which caused such violence that they were massacred, their houses pillaged, and their belongings burnt.⁶ These outbursts, which will often recur in the fourth century, must at least be mentioned here. The easy and attractive life which Alexandria presented at first sight concealed dormant savage passions which could be terrible when they awoke. In the time of the Ptolemies Alexandria was called "the aviary of the Muses," but it was sometimes more like a menagerie of wild beasts.

Origin of the School of Alexandria

The School of Alexandria is well known to us only from the time of Clement. St. Jerome attributes its commencement to St. Mark himself.⁷ Without attaching too much importance to this unsupported statement, we may remark that even before the establishment of Christianity in Alexandria, the city was famous for its schools. The pagans had there the Museum, founded by Ptolemy, and also the Serapeum; the Jews, who were very numerous, likewise had their schools. Hence it is natural that Christians should wish to have there a centre of religious instruction. At Rome we have met with the school of St. Justin;⁸ the martyred philosopher was succeeded by Tatian, and then by Rhodon. But this Roman school seems to have been purely private in character, and to have

constrained to adore the Christ and Serapis, and those who call themselves Christian bishops are at the same time devotees of Serapis."

⁵ *Hist. August., Spartianus*, VI.

⁶ These facts are related in detail by Bishop Dionysius in a letter to Fabius of Antioch (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli, 1-9). In the fourth century, the Arian bishop George will likewise be put to death by the populace, and also the philosopher Hypatia. Under Theodosius the same fate befell the prisoners of the Serapeum.

⁷ *De viris illustribus*, xxxvi. In connection with Pantaenus, he tells us of a "very ancient custom," by which, "from the time of Mark the evangelist, there were at Alexandria ecclesiastical doctors."

⁸ Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 545.

had a very modest development. At Alexandria the school was more closely linked with the episcopate, at least from the third century, and had a much wider influence. Its heads were successively: Pantaenus, Clement, Origen, Heraclas, Alexander, Dionysius, Pierius, Theognostus, Peter, Macarius, and then in the fourth century Didymus the Blind, and lastly Rhodon, who in 405 migrated to Sidon in Pamphilia.

This succession of masters testifies to the continued existence of the school, but we must not think of it after the fashion of our modern universities, or even of the Museum at Alexandria. The Christian School had no rich endowment. A wealthy friend, Ambrose, had to provide Origen with the copies of which he had need; from his own disciples, even the rich, Origen did not wish to take anything. Neither was there any building belonging to the school; the master taught where he lived. He was usually the sole lecturer; sometimes he was assisted by an auxiliary who took over part of the teaching. Thus Heraclas was assistant to Origen during the last years of the latter's stay in Alexandria. Again, the teaching was not exclusively religious; it was no longer a mere apologetical preparation, like the teaching of Justin at Rome; it was an encyclopædic teaching, presenting in the first place the whole series of profane sciences, and then rising to moral and religious philosophy, and finally to Christian theology, set forth in the form of a commentary on the sacred books. This encyclopædic conception of teaching was an Alexandrian tradition, and was found also in the Museum and in the Jewish school. It had the drawback that it required in the master a universal knowledge which could in some matters only amount to a superficial assimilation. On the other hand, it assured the continuity of the intellectual formation, wholly supervised, as it was, by one and the same master, and tending, through all the human and divine sciences, to the one end, the knowledge of God. When Origen was the master, he was able to bring to his task a great capacity for work, an exceptional ease in assimilation, and above all, a luminous and rich mind, and the influence of such a formation must have been very great indeed.

Pantaenus

The first master of the School of Alexandria known to us is Pantaenus. In his *Stromata*, Clement recalls the memory of the "blessed persons, worthy to be remembered, whom he had the

good fortune to hear." The first ones are vaguely described, and cannot be identified. "But the last, whom I met by chance, was indeed the first in merit. I finally found him in Egypt, where he was hidden. He was indeed like the Sicilian bee and, having feasted on the flowers of the field in the prophets and the apostles, he deposited in the souls of his hearers an incorruptible treasure of knowledge. These men, moreover, retained the true tradition of holy teaching which came directly from the holy apostles, Peter and James, John and Paul, as a son receives an inheritance from his father."⁹

The School of Alexandria cannot as yet have been very well known, seeing that it was only by chance that Clement discovered Pantaenus, this "excellent master who had hidden himself in Egypt," and to whom Clement henceforth attached himself.¹⁰

§ 2. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA¹

Life of Clement

Clement is a Christian writer who is more attractive when viewed at a distance: a closer study is rather disconcerting. He had

⁹ *Strom.*, I, xi, 1-3, quoted in part by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xi, 3-5. To these memories Eusebius adds (V, x, 2) a few traditions which he sets forth with reserve: "It is said that he displayed such ardour and so courageous a love for the divine word that he became a distinguished preacher of the Gospel of Christ to the nations of the East and that he even went as far as the Indies. . . ." Jerome copies Eusebius, with some abridgment; he adds that Pantaenus taught under Severus and Caracalla (*De viris illustribus*, xxxvi), but that is certainly an anachronism.

¹⁰ We would like to know more about the teaching of Pantaenus. Bousset thought he could detect it in passages in certain of Clement's books. It has long been noted that the eighth book of the *Stromata* is only a collection of notes which Clement had made for other use. The *Excerpta* and the *Eclogae* have the same character: they are not finished works, but dossiers and collections of notes gathered together by Clement, either in the course of his reading, or, if we are to believe Bousset, when hearing the lectures of Pantaenus. In the *Stromata*, I-VII, Bousset also finds unconnected portions, fragments of previous teaching or works. Cf. W. Bousset, *Judisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom*, Göttingen, 1915, pp. 155-271. These researches, carried through with much labour, provide the basis for ingenious hypotheses, but such weak foundations can hardly support an historic certainty. Cf. J. Munck, *Untersuchungen über Klemens von Alexandria*, Stuttgart, 1933, pp. 151-185. The author thus concludes his discussion on Bousset's conjectures: "Concerning Pantaenus we can only make hypotheses; if we must say something of him, it will be that what Clement was, Pantaenus was before him" (p. 184). Cf. Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto*, pp. 5-16, and *infra*, p. 899, n. 21.

¹ Editions: Migne, P.G., Vols. VIII and IX, reproducing the Oxford edition of 1715; O. Staehlin, 3 vols. in the *Corpus* published by the Berlin Academy,

a wide outlook, and an ardent mind. He attracts us by his warm sympathy, his sincerity, and his zeal for the study of God and of the Word. But while he has the charm of the intuitionists, he also has their defects. He turns his mind to systematic and general questions, but is not very successful in analysing them, and allows himself to be led hither and thither by his impulses and reminiscences. If we add to this that his chief work, the *Stromata*, or Miscellanies, is unfinished, and that he deliberately sets out to perplex the reader, we shall understand what an effort is required on the part of one who wishes to study it. A critic who is one of the greatest admirers of the *Stromata* says this of it: "This work is perhaps the most important of all Christian writings of the second and third centuries, and at the same time there is not one that is more difficult."²

Clement appeared in the full light of history for only twenty or twenty-five years. He was born about 150, probably at Athens,³ of pagan parents;⁴ he has not given an account of his conversion.

Leipzig, 1905-1909 (this is the text we use); Hort-Mayor in *Miscellanies Book VII*, London, 1902; R. P. Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodota of Clement of Alexandria*, London, 1934. Studies: Mgr. Freppel, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1865; E. de Faye, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1906; R. B. Tollinton, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Liberalism*, London, 1914, 2 vols.; J. Patrick, *Clement of Alexandria*, London, 1914; Bousset and Munck, works mentioned, p. 732, n. 2; G. Bardy, *Clément d'Alexandrie* (collection, *Moralistes chrétiens*, Paris, 1926; O. Staehlin, *Des Clement von Alexandria ausgewählte Schriften aus dem griechischen überetzt*, Munich, 1934, 2 vols., especially Introduction, Vol. I, pp. 9-68.

² E. de Faye, *op. cit.*, p. 45. Cf. Tillemont, *Saint Clément d'Alexandrie*, art. V, p. 194: "Blondel has made a long list of the places in which, in his opinion, Clement errs. . . . He claims that he had less judgment than memory, breadth of mind and erudition. Others consider that he is stronger on morals than on dogma, that he gives too much place to allegory, and writes almost always without order or sequence. It is certain that even in the *Stromata* there are many instances of false reasoning, and many things which are disturbing, either in their meaning or in the manner of expressing them. . . ." But, in the beginning of the next article, Tillemont remarks that "God judges us according to our hearts rather than according to our minds." And several saints have greatly praised Clement: Alexander of Jerusalem (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xi); Jerome (*De viris illustribus*, xxxviii); Cyril of Alexandria (*In Julianum*, VI, in Migne, P.G., Vol. LXXVI, 813); Maximus the Confessor (*Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, in Migne, P.G., Vol. XCI, 317).

³ Concerning the place of his birth there were already two traditions in the time of Epiphanius (*Haer.*, XXXII, vi), giving Athens or Alexandria. The second, doubtless, arose from his long stay in that city; the first agrees better with *Stromata*, I, xi.

⁴ *Paedagogus*, I, i, 1; II, vii, 62; Eusebius, *Praep. evang.*, II, ii, 64.

We may with likelihood regard it as the end of a long search for God, similar to that described by Justin Martyr. For his works manifest an ardent desire for religious knowledge; the soul goes through the world seeking it from anyone who can offer it; finally Pantaenus gives it to him.

These years of seeking left a deep impression on the mind of Clement. What we notice in him especially is the concern for tradition, and chiefly for oral tradition,⁵ and in this respect, by his frequent repetition of the sayings of the presbyters,⁶ he reminds us of Irenæus. We find in these two great Christians the same veneration in regard to the presbyters as witnesses of tradition, an agreement which is all the more remarkable in that their minds were so different. What Irenæus admired above all in this tradition was that it is the common good of all men, the one sun which enlightens all. Clement regards it above all as the sacred deposit which must be transmitted only to those who are worthy of it, and preferably by oral teaching, because to put it in writing involves the risk of profaning it.

To souls which are well prepared, the communication of knowledge or gnosis will be a revelation which will make them pass from sleep to full consciousness, from shadows to the light.⁷ Clement

⁵ *Eclogae*, xxvii: "The presbyters did not write; they did not want the work of teaching the tradition to be embarrassed by the task of writing, and they did not wish to spend in writing the time they preferred to devote to preparing what they were to say. Perhaps also they were persuaded that the work of composition and that of teaching differ in nature, and they may have abandoned the former to those who were fitted for it." After thus pointing out the difference between the two, he speaks of the danger and of the necessity of writing: "The deposit transmitted by the presbyters who speak through writing makes use of the service of the scribe in order to extend tradition to others and to save those whom it reaches. Hence, just as a magnet, in presence of other matter, attracts only iron, by reason of the similitude of nature, so also books, although they reach many people, influence only those who are capable of understanding them. . . . A gnostic is far removed from envy! So he asks himself which is worse, to offer (knowledge) to one who is unworthy, or to refuse it to one who is worthy, and in his great love he prefers to run the risk of communicating it, not only to all those who can suitably receive it, but also sometimes to an unworthy person who insists on asking for it, not indeed because of this request—for he has no vanity—but because of the perseverance of the one who asks in this way, and who by doing so advances towards the faith." This theme is repeated by Clement in the *Stromata*, I, i-x, VII, x, 55, 6. Cf. on these, chs. xxvii-xxxvii of the *Excerpta*, Bousset, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

⁶ The texts of Clement on the presbyters have been collected by Harnack, *Geschichte der Litteratur*, Vol. I, p. 192; cf. De Faye, *op. cit.*, p. 24, n. 1.

⁷ *Eclogae*, xxxv.

himself experienced this illumination more than once, and his whole ambition was to pass his life in this thrill, this exultation, this praise of God; an ambition which may sometimes have been mingled with illusion, but which nevertheless elevated to a high ideal the life of the Alexandrian master.

Clement doubtless commenced by assisting Pantaenus, and then took his place. His teaching seems to have lasted some fifteen years at the most. Begun about 190, it was stopped by the persecuting edict of Severus in 202.⁸ About 211 we find him in retirement in Cappadocia near to Bishop Alexander, who had been his disciple and who always retained a fervent affection for him. Writing to the church of Antioch, Alexander sent his letter by Clement, and thus introduced him: "I send you this writing, my lords and brethren, by Clement, the holy priest and virtuous and esteemed person of whom you have heard and whom you know. His presence here has, according to the watchful providence of the Lord, fortified and increased the Church."⁹

We see from this testimony that Clement did not remain inactive in his exile; he carried on his sacerdotal ministry as a priest. But Cappadocia was not Alexandria; Clement did not find there a Catechetical School. These new conditions of a less active life, and one less charged with responsibilities, may explain the characteristics of the last two *Stromata* which were then composed: in these we find mystical aspirations, ardent but sometimes confused, very prominent, leading the soul towards a beatitude which the simple faithful do not know.

This last period was in any case a short one; towards 215 or 216 Alexander, who had become bishop of Jerusalem, wrote to Origen, and in doing so spoke of Clement as dead.¹⁰

⁸ We know that this edict forbade all conversions to Christianity (cf. p. 753); a school such as that of Clement must have been particularly affected.

⁹ Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xi, 6.

¹⁰ Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 8-9, quoted in Bk. IV. Clement was for a time the object of a local cultus. Cf. Tillemont, *op. cit.*, p. 195: "We have said that his feast was observed on December 4th in several martyrologies, and although his name is not included in the *Roman Martyrology* of Baronius, this has not prevented the use of some passages from his works in the Proper of the church of Paris, and even the attribution to him of the title of Saint. It is said that, although at Rome some surprise was manifested at this, very soon the authority of Usuard was accepted, and it was considered strange that Baronius had not included his name, seeing that the Martyrology of Usuard had long been the ordinary Martyrology of the Church, and was still in use in various places." The question was subsequently settled by Benedict XIV in his letter

His Works

The chief work of Clement is the trilogy consisting of the *Protrepticus*, the *Paedagogus*, and the *Stromata*. Before we deal with these three works, we must briefly mention the others, and first of all the homily *On the Salvation of the Rich*.¹¹ This short treatise is interesting because it brings before us, not the educator and philosopher who appears in the principal works, but the priest, careful for the salvation of his flock, and showing them the way. The most popular portion of this short composition is the account which concludes it, the story of St. John and the young robber.¹² With this homily we may link a fragment which has come down to us¹³ of an *Exhortation to Patience*, addressed to the newly baptized.¹⁴

Clement had also written *Hypotyposes* or *Outlines*; these were allegorical commentaries on passages of the Old and New Testaments. These are extant only in fragments, found for the most part in quotations in Eusebius,¹⁵ together with a longer portion on the Catholic epistles, which exists in a Latin translation.¹⁶ Photius passed a very severe judgment on these *Hypotyposes*; he considered them blasphemous, and could not believe that they were really written by Clement.¹⁷ Our own knowledge of these books is so imperfect that it is difficult for us to revise this judgment of Photius.¹⁸

of July 1st, 1748, to the King of Portugal. He upheld the exclusion pronounced by Clement VIII at the request of Baronius, for three reasons (a) one cannot prove the heroic character of his virtues; (b) there is no evidence of public cultus; (c) his doctrine, if not erroneous, is at least suspect on several points: "Quisquis, citra partium studia, maturo judicio secum expendat quae a nobis hucusque prolata sunt, profecto fateri cogitur Clementis Alexandrini doctrinam saltem suspectam esse de erroribus."

¹¹ It is usually known by its Latin title, *Quis dives salvetur*. Ed. by Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 159-191; Migne, P.G., Vol. IX, 603-652. Its date is uncertain. Cf. edition of P. M. Barnard, in *Texts and Studies*, V, 2.

¹² Reproduced by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, III, xxiii, 5; cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-140.

¹³ In a manuscript in the Escorial.

¹⁴ Barnard, *op. cit.*, pp. 47 *et seq.*; ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 221-223; Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-240.

¹⁵ Ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 195-202.

¹⁶ This fragment is entitled: *Adumbrationes Clementis Alexandrini in Epistolas canonicas*. Ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 203-215; Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des N. T. Kanons*, Vol. III, pp. 134 *et seq.*

¹⁷ *Codex* 109-111 (Migne, P.G., Vol. CIII, 384-5).

¹⁸ Zahn (*op. cit.*, pp. 138-147) maintains that the *Hypotyposes* have not been interpolated. We need only mention the names of other fragments *On the Pasch*

The works we have just mentioned are personal compositions, but the manuscripts of Clement also contain collections of materials from various sources gathered together with a view to future elaboration. Such is the work published under the title of the eighth book of *Stromata*,¹⁹ and such also are the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* and the *Eclogae propheticae*.²⁰ These collections are of great interest: they introduce us to some forerunners of Clement.²¹ Among the religious ideas put forward in these texts, there are some which Clement always rejects, as, for instance, that which represents God as a material being.²² There are others which, although not explicitly condemned by Clement, always remained foreign to his thought, as for instance the Pythagorean fancy which sees everywhere the dualism of opposed male and female principles;²³ but there are also some themes which he often takes up and delights to develop; this applies particularly to the idea of the spiritual hierarchy of beings.²⁴ All this motley collection, in which side by side with high mystical aspirations we find gross materialistic conceptions, gives us some idea of the religious surroundings in which Clement grew up and passed his life.

The Trilogy

In the trilogy formed by the *Protrepticus*, the *Paedagogus*, and the *Stromata*, Clement aims at a gradual formation of his disciples: "The heavenly guide, the Logos, is called *Protreptikos* or converter when he invites mankind to salvation. . . . But when he

(ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, p. 216), *On the ecclesiastical canon* (*ibid.*, p. 218), *On Providence* (*ibid.*, p. 219), and fragments of letters (*ibid.*, p. 223).

¹⁹ Ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 80-102; Migne, P.G., Vol. IX, pp. 557-602. Cf. above p. 894, n. 10.

²⁰ Ed. Staehlin, Vol. III, pp. 103-133, 135-155; Migne, P.G., Vol. IX, 681-697, 697-728. R. P. Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto*, London, 1934.

²¹ P. Collomp studied these collections in the *Revue de Philologie*, Vol. XXXVII, 1913, pp. 19-46. He investigated the sources, and succeeded in recognising a Jewish source, the influence of which can also be discerned in several passages in the *Clementine Homilies*. This inquiry has provided the starting point for the later researches of Bousset. His conclusions go much farther than those of Collomp, but they are less certain. Casey, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-16, rejects the hypotheses of Bousset, and attributes to Clement himself all that is not from Theodotus.

²² *Excerpta*, x-xvi. Cf. Collomp, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²³ *Ibid.*, x-xxvii. Cf. Collomp, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-29.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, x-xii, xxvii; *Eclogae*, li-lvii. Cf. Collomp, *op. cit.*, pp. 22 *et seq.*; Bousset, *op. cit.*, p. 161 and pp. 190-192.

functions as a physician and a teacher . . . he will receive the name of *Pedagogue*. . . . The sick soul has need of a pedagogue, who will cure it of its passions; then, it needs a teacher or doctor, who will make it apt to know . . . the revelation of the Logos. Thus the Logos wishing to achieve our salvation step by step, follows an excellent method: he converts in the first place, then he disciplines, and finally he instructs."²⁵

The programme thus outlined indicates very well the constant preoccupation of Clement: the progressive initiation of souls. In his works he does not set out to satisfy curiosity, but to extend and perpetuate the educative action of the Catechetical School, i.e. first by freeing pagans from idolatry, then by forming them in Christian morals, and finally by instructing them in Christian doctrine. Of the wide programme thus outlined, the first two parts are dealt with in the *Protrepticus* and the *Paedagogus*; the third, at least in part, is dealt with in the *Stromata*.²⁶

The Protrepticus

Of the three works of the trilogy, the *Protrepticus* is the easiest to analyse. It is a warm exhortation to listen to the Word, the one Master.

According to an ancient legend, Eunomius of Locres was singing one day at Delphi before the assembled people; a string of his zither broke;

²⁵ *Paedagogus*, I, 1.

²⁶ This last point has been called in question by De Faye (*op. cit.*, ch. 4, *Le Maître*; ch. 6, *Du véritable caractère des Stromates*; Appendix II, *Du plan des Stromates*). According to him, the *Stromata* would be but a preparatory work, intended to remove the objections which folk of small culture raised against philosophy; and were to be followed by another work, the *Didascalia*, which was never written. It would seem that in this discussion De Faye attributes too much definiteness to Clement's thought. It may be that the *Stromata* are not the finished work which Clement had planned, but they are an outline of it. Cf. Prat, *Projets littéraires de Clément d'Alexandrie* in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XV, 1925, pp. 234-257, and especially pp. 238-241. The dates of these works are difficult to determine. Harnack (*Chronologie*, appendix, pp. 541 *et seq.*), correcting his text (pp. 9-11), thinks that the *Protrepticus* was written between 180 and 190, the *Stromata*, Books I-IV and the *Paedagogus* would belong somewhere between 190 and 202. Books V-VII of the *Stromata* would be subsequent to Clement's departure from Alexandria in 202. So also Bousset (*Schulbetrieb*, p. 218, n.). Tollinton (*op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 329-331) thinks, on the contrary, that the whole trilogy was composed at Alexandria, and the *Hypotyposes* would be later. Without in any way claiming to decide so obscure a question, we here adopt, as a hypothesis, the chronology of Harnack.

a grasshopper alighted on the instrument, and his singing replaced the music of the broken string. You believe in these fables, but you do not believe the truth which we announce to you. We tell you that Wisdom has come down from heaven, and extends to us his sovereign hand, which is intelligence, to save us. This is the harmony spread through the whole world, sounded forth from mankind through the Holy Spirit; the Logos himself is the perfect instrument of God. This saving chant sounded forth from the commencement, but in recent times it has made itself heard by taking a new name, the Christ, God and man. In this way, that which pre-existed has been manifested; the Demiurge appears as our Teacher, he will vivify as God.

After this brilliant introduction, Clement passes on to a criticism of polytheism, the mysteries, sacrifices, and idols (chs. ii-vii). At the same time, he recognises that there are some truths in the philosophers, and especially in Plato. These come from a divine source, and also by borrowing from the Jews. The poets have likewise received some inspirations from the divine Logos.

The exhortation continues, pressing and ardent:

If the sun did not exist, night would be everywhere, in spite of the other stars. Similarly, if we did not know the Logos, and He did not enlighten us, we should be no better than chickens fattened in darkness and destined for the spit. Let us receive the light, in order to receive God; let us receive the light and become the disciples of the Lord. He made this promise to the Father: "I will publish thy name among my brethren, I will praise thee in the assembly." Yes, celebrate thy Father, O Word, make me to know God! Thy revelations save. thy chants will teach me, for until this day I have wandered about seeking God. And, Lord, as thou enlightenest me, and as, thanks to thee, I find God and receive the Father, I become thy co-heir, for Thou hast not been ashamed of thy brother.²⁷

This rapid outline brings out the charm of Clement's works: they manifest a moving and tender piety, and at the same time an enthusiastic zeal. His great preoccupation is moral formation. Like Justin, he sees in Jesus the Logos, our sole Master. Justin asked Him above all for revelation; Clement seeks from him total conversion. He looks for this to Him and to Him alone; thus Christianity has over all philosophy and every other religion a transcendence which is self-evident for Clement.²⁸ It is this very

²⁷ *Protrepticus*, xi, 113, 3-5. Cf. De Faye, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

²⁸ Cf. De Faye, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

profound and sincere Christianity that attracts us to-day in the *Protrepticus*; the ivy and thyrsus are now only faded decorations, but these exhortations are always earnest and affecting as they were when first written.

The Paedagogus

The *Protrepticus* is the most sober and best constructed of all Clement's writings. The others are more charged with doctrine, but they contain more digressions than we can follow out here in detail. We must confine ourselves to giving first a general outline of the train of thought, and then an analysis of the chief ideas which underlie these books.

The *Paedagogus*²⁹ has as its object the moral reform of the Christian. It is divided into three books; the second and third set forth the teaching of the Tutor, while the first reveals to us his personality.

Our tutor, oh children, resembles God his Father; He is the Son of God, without sin and without defect; his soul is impassible; the immaculate God under a human form, the minister of the will of the Father, God the Word, who is in the Father, who comes from the right hand of the Father, God in human form. He is for us the immaculate image, to which with all our might, we are to endeavour to assimilate our soul. But He is wholly free from all human passions; the only judge, because He alone is without sin; but we must, as much as lies within our power, strive to keep ourselves as free as possible from sin.³⁰

Thus, on the threshold of Christian morality there appears the incarnate Word; and the old precept, "Imitate God," has an altogether new value. Our God is altogether near to us by his humanity, and at the same time He is the immaculate Image of the Father, the ideal Model whom we must strive to resemble. These great ideas are set forth under innumerable different forms in the course of the first book. While doing so, Clement sets aside the heresies which threaten the Christian faith. He does not delay over controversy, but he brings out in full light the truths which have been misrepresented. The Gnostics imagine that there are castes

²⁹ Ed. Staehlin, Vol. I, pp. 87-340; Migne, P.G., Vol. VIII, 247-684. On the moral teaching set forth in this work, cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 26 *et seq.*

³⁰ *Paedag.*, I, ii, 4, 1-2.

in Christianity, separating the psychicals from the pneumatics. This is a pernicious error:

As soon as we are regenerated by baptism, we immediately receive the perfect gift to which we aspire, for we have been enlightened, that is, we have received the knowledge of God, and one who has known the perfect cannot be imperfect. . . . Being baptised, we are enlightened; being enlightened we are the children of God; being children of God we receive a perfect gift; and receiving a perfect gift we possess immortality. . . . We the baptised, delivered from the sins the obscurity of which constituted an obstacle to the Holy Spirit, have the eye of a free mind, transparent and luminous, and by means of it we see God, the Holy Spirit being shed upon us from high heaven. Penetrated by this eternal ray, we are able to see the eternal light; for like loves like, and that which is holy is loved by the source of all sanctity, which is essentially light. For you were darkness, and now you are light in the Lord. . . . You have all been baptised in Christ, you have put on Christ; there is no longer Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female, but you are all one in Christ Jesus. Thus it will not be said that some are Gnostics and others psychicals in the same Word, but all, having put off carnal desires, are equal and pneumatical in the Lord.³¹

It is a pity that we have had to abridge this passage, as it is of vital importance. Clement is under no illusions as to the imperfection of the Christian. He recognises that faith is only a starting point, and that the final term will be the eternal possession of the promises. But it is faith that gives us the assured pledge of these promises. "Whosoever believeth in the Son hath eternal life."³² There is no other privilege to aspire to; beyond the divine adoption and eternal life there is nothing more, and these supreme goods are assured to all Christians by the fact of their baptism.

This one vocation of all Christians comes from the one God, and these gifts are conferred upon all through the one Church:

O wonderful mystery! There is but one Father of the universe, there is but one Logos of the universe, and the Holy Spirit likewise is one and the same everywhere. And there is but one Virgin Mother, for so I love to call the Church. This mother alone is without milk, for she is not a woman, but a virgin as well as a mother, pure as a virgin, loving as a mother; she calls her children and feeds with a holy milk, the Logos made child.³³

³¹ *Paedag.*, I, vi, 25, 1; 26, 1; 28, 1-2; 31, 1-2.

³² *Ibid.*, 28, 5-29, 1.

³³ *Paedag.*, I, vi, 42, 1. Cf. Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, p. 314.

This fine passage brings to us echoes of a teaching we have heard more than once in the course of the second century, the motherhood of the Church which the old Hermas already revered with such touching tenderness.³⁴ That the Word became by His incarnation the milk of children had likewise been said by Irenæus.³⁵ All these symbols flow together here into one and the same mystical current, which carries the soul towards the Church. And the Church which Clement envisages is not at all the Church imagined by the Gnostics in the far-off shadow of the Pleroma, it is the one visible Church, which carries within itself all Christians, and feeds them all with the one Word.³⁶

This high theology, developed in the course of the first book, dominates the whole of the *Paedagogus*; and it also gives to Clement's ethical teaching its Christian character. If we merely consider the details of the moral precepts, we shall recognise in Clement's works numerous elements borrowed from Musonius, Cicero, Gallienus, and, above all, from Philo.³⁷ This dependence is not at all surprising, and we could point out many other examples belonging to that time, especially in treatises on morals. But more interesting to us than this examination of sources is the study of the

³⁴ Cf. Bk. II, p. 451.

³⁵ "He, the perfect bread of the Father, has given himself to us as to little children under the form of milk; that is, his presence as man. He desires that, nourished by his flesh and accustomed by this food to eat and drink the Word of God, we may be able to assimilate to ourselves the bread of immortality which is the Spirit of the Father" (*Adv. Haer.*, IV, xxxviii, 1).

³⁶ The insistence with which Clement affirms this unity of God and of the Church marks a reaction against Marcionism. We often find in this work the same controversial preoccupation: "Our Pedagogue is the holy God Jesus, the Word who teaches the whole human race, the God who is the friend of mankind"; He it was who made his people come out of Egypt, who gradually formed it in the desert; it was He who appeared to Abraham, Jacob and Moses (I, vii, 55, 2-58, 3). This controversy becomes more direct in ch. vii-xii, in which Clement proves, against those who deny it, that the same God is just and good. See also the defence of the Law in *Strom.*, I, xxvii, 171. Cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

³⁷ The borrowings from Musonius have especially been denounced by P. Wendland, *Quaestiones Musonianae*, Berlin, 1886. Subsequently Wendland modified his view: cf. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie*, Berlin, 1895, pp. 68 *et seq.*; *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1898, p. 653. Here he says that Clement did not directly take from Musonius, but from notes made by a pupil of lectures of Musonius. Cf. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, pp. 129-132; Bardenheuer, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur*, Vol. II, p. 39. The source most frequently used is Philo: the instances are pointed out by Staehlin in the notes to his edition.

moral tendencies which are evident in all the details concerning precepts and prohibitions accumulated in these books.³⁸

About the same date, Tertullian was given at Carthage the same moral teaching. But there was a great difference between them. Tertullian adopted a more vigorous treatment; he found, not in books but in life itself the faults and follies he opposed, and he condemned them with such harshness that he often ran the risk of wounding those he wished to heal. The priest of Alexandria did not display the passionate ardour of the priest at Carthage, nor did he speak with the same tragic accent. He denounced with a polite smile the follies of the worldly life;³⁹ he had a very just sense of decency and of what was fitting in Christians;⁴⁰ and in him the noble human ideal set forth by the best of the pagans, and traced out once more after them, has been transformed by the ideal model, the Christ, who projects his divine light upon all our life.

These characteristics, so plainly brought out in the whole of the first book, appear once more at the end of the work, where they are set forth in a full light:

O let us foster a blessed discipline of teaching! Let us complete in ourselves the beauty of the Church,⁴¹ and as little children let us run to our good Mother. Even when we have become the hearers of the Word, let us glorify the blessed dispensation by which man has been brought up; he is sanctified as a child of God, and the education he

³⁸ The reader who has no time to follow out the whole course of this meandering thought in all its detail, but who nevertheless wishes to study its main direction and character, could not desire a better guide than M. Bardy (*op. cit.*, and especially second part, *La Vie chrétienne*, pp. 142-245).

³⁹ See, for instance, what is said of vesture in *Paed.*, II, viii, 65-68 and xii, 118. Cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-159. We find even here the moderation of the moralist: he allows women to adorn themselves to please their husbands, but they ought "gradually to lead them to simplicity, by accustoming them little by little to greater moderation" (*Ibid.*, III, xi, 57; cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, p. 160).

⁴⁰ Examples may be found in advice given to women: cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-220. We will call attention merely to one or two features: "Beauty is the natural flower of health; the latter works within the body, while the former manifests the state of the flourishing organism which is unfolding itself. Accordingly, the best and most healthy activities, by exercising the body, produce healthy and lasting beauty" (*Paed.*, III, xi, 64, 3-65, 1). "Work gives true beauty to women; it exercises their bodies, and embellishes them naturally, not indeed with the vesture which comes from the labour of others, a vesture without charm and good for slaves and courtesans, but with the vesture which a good woman weaves for herself by the labour of her hands" (*Ibid.*, 67, 1).

⁴¹ We like to read once more in this text the phrase which is so affecting, but so difficult to translate: *Τὸ καλὸν τῆς ἐκκλησίας πληρώσωμεν πρόσωπον*.

receives on earth makes him a citizen of the heavens, there he finds the Father whom he has learnt to know upon earth; and all this formation, this teaching, this education, comes to us from the Word. . . . To complete this praise of the Word, it remains for us to pray to Him. Be propitious to thy children, O pedagogue, Father, Horseman of Israel, Father and Son, both one single thing, and Lord! Grant to us that by following thy commandments we may complete the likeness of the image, and to realise as much as we can that God is good, and not a severe judge. Grant us to live in thy peace, to be transported to thy city, crossing without shipwreck the ocean of sin, and wafted on by the sweet breeze of the Holy Spirit, who is ineffable wisdom, night and day, until the dawn of the eternal day, singing a song of thanksgiving to the one Father and Son, Son and Father, to the Son our tutor and master, with the Holy Spirit. All to the One, in whom are all things and by whom all are one, by whom is eternity, of whom we are all members, to whom is glory and the ages. All to Him who is good, all to Him who is wise, to Him who is just, all to Him! To Him be glory now and for ever, Amen!⁴²

The Stromata

The works we have just examined have introduced us only to the moral preparation of the Christian. The *Protrepticus* invites him to it, and the *Paedagogus* trains him for it, but all this education is directed towards an end which is higher still, theological teaching. It is to this summit that the *Stromata* endeavour to raise the Christian.

The seven books⁴³ of the *Stromata* constitute the most important work of Clement, but also the one which most defies analysis. The title, *Stromata*, or *Miscellanies*, was not unknown at that time;⁴⁴ Clement himself explains it: a book of this kind is like a field filled with all sorts of plants; a man who is diligent will find there what he is seeking, but he must look for it.⁴⁵ Later on the writer shows at length the utility of symbols, which make known the truth only to those who deserve to know it.⁴⁶ After reading these declarations it is not surprising that the sequence of the book is often disconcert-

⁴² *Paed.*, III, xii, 99, 1; 101, 1-2; Cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-243; *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 237-238.

⁴³ The eighth book of the *Stromata*, of course, has a quite different character (cf. *supra*, p. 899).

⁴⁴ Cf. Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, pref., 11; De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-98.

⁴⁵ *Strom.*, IV, ii, 4-8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, V, viii-ix, 19-66.

ing, and its detail obscure. We shall not follow out here all the course of his wandering thought; we will rather endeavour to describe the chief problems which Clement discusses, and the solution he offers of them. These discussions are all the more interesting to us because they make known to us not only the master of the Catechetical School, but also the Christians around him, who were being carried in opposite directions by currents of contrary ideas.⁴⁷

Towards the end of the second and at the beginning of the third century, we notice almost everywhere in the Church, in Gaul,⁴⁸ at Carthage,⁴⁹ and Rome,⁵⁰ a divergence between the popular faith and learned theology. Doubtless this divergence did not amount to a contradiction: within the Church both learned and simple folk profess the same faith, but the simple people, alarmed at the Gnostic heresy, were not happy about learned speculations, and the scholars were similarly distrusted by the simple, and were sometimes annoyed in consequence.

This divergence was most manifest at Alexandria. Clement often complained of the opposition he encountered around him.⁵¹ Already at the commencement of the *Stromata* this preoccupation is manifest:

Should there be no writing at all, or are there some to whom this right should be restricted? In the former case, of what use are letters? In the second alternative, is the right to write to be given to those who are in earnest or to those who are not? . . . Are we, for instance, to

⁴⁷ These opposing directions have been studied in greater detail in our articles in the *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, Vol. XIX, 1923, pp. 481-505, and Vol. XX, 1924, pp. 5-37, *Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l'Eglise chrétienne du III^e siècle*. Cf. Bk. IV.

⁴⁸ Irenæus's thought is, as always in so great a master, prudent; but his preferences admit of no doubt; neither does his mistrust. Cf. *supra*, pp. 668-670 and Bk. IV.

⁴⁹ Tertullian, *De Praescriptione*, VII, 9-13; *Adv. Praxean*, III; cf. Bk. IV.

⁵⁰ Hippolytus and Novatian represent, among other tendencies, the opposition of theologians, proud of their science, to the bishops of Rome, whom they regarded as too simple. The position of Hippolytus is well described by Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 741: "Hippolytus regards Zephyrinus and the others as simple folk, because they do not wish to take up the new science with its 'economic' conception of God." As for Novatian, it is enough to recall the jeers of Cornelius against "this dogmatiser, this protector of ecclesiastical science" (letter to Fabius, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 8), and Cyprian's invectives: "Let him exalt himself, let him proudly boast of his philosophy and his eloquence!" (letter to Antonianus, *Epist.*, lv, 24, cf. letter to Cornelius, *Epist.*, LX, iii).

⁵¹ Cf. De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 137 et seq.

allow Theopompus, Timaeus the author of impure fables, Epicurus the advocate of atheism, Hipponax or Archilochus, to write their shameful works, and forbid one who sets forth the truth to leave to posterity writings which will do good? (*Strom.*, I, i, 1-2.)

And a little later on, in this same *Stromata*:

I am not unaware that certain ignorant people, who take fright at the least noise, would have us confine ourselves to essential things and those related to the faith, and think we ought to neglect those things which come from without and are superfluous (*Ibid.*, I, i, 18, 2).

And again:

Some people, who think themselves to be spiritual, hold that one ought to have nothing to do either with philosophy or with dialectic, or even to apply oneself to the study of the universe. They advocate faith pure and simple, as if they were to refuse to labour on a vine and wanted immediately to pick the grapes (*Ibid.*, I, ix, 43, 1).

These texts, and many others which might be added, show that the situation at Alexandria was more tense than it was in the West at that time; suspicions were more prevalent among the simple believers, and there was more irritation among the theologians. E. de Faye explains this alarm in the faithful as due to the more vivid realisation of the danger of the Gnostic heresy.⁵² This explanation is correct, but it is incomplete. Within the Church itself there were at Alexandria some "gnostics," that is Christians who, without denying the traditional dogmas or in any way refusing the obedience due to the Church, aimed at a more profound and more thoughtful knowledge of the truths they professed. This was a feature peculiar to Alexandrian Christianity, and that is why the conflict was sharper and more formidable in that church.

To meet the difficulty, Clement in his *Stromata* has to discuss two great problems, the relations between Hellenism and Christianity, and those between gnosis and the faith.

Hellenism and Christianity

Of these two problems, the former is not the most serious, but it is the most obvious. Is Hellenism, regarded especially from the point of view of its philosophy, reconcilable with Christianity?

⁵² *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

Ought Christians to see in it a danger or a help? To this question, Tertullian gave at that time the most severe and most definite answer.⁵³ Hippolytus brought more erudition to the discussion, but he had no more sympathy for hellenism or its philosophy, which he regarded as sources of heresies. Clement takes the opposite view. He, of course, adheres to Christianity with all his soul, but this does not prevent him from retaining a sentiment of heartfelt gratitude towards hellenic philosophy, such as had already been manifested by certain apologists, and in particular by Justin, without, however, the rich learning which unfolds itself in Clement's writings, and especially in the *Stromata*.⁵⁴

Such fidelity in the case of Clement is the more remarkable because things were no longer as they were in the time of Justin. During the thirty or forty years separating the Alexandrian from the Roman master, the Gnostic crisis had greatly disturbed Christians, who had in consequence instinctively become more suspicious of outside influences. This mistrust was well known to Clement, but it did not stop him: quite the contrary. His reaction did not express itself merely in one simple reply but in a deliberate and bold thesis: the hellenic philosophy is a gift from God and salutary, whether we regard its action upon pagans in the past or its present influence upon Christians. These are two aspects of one and the same thesis.⁵⁵ Clement sometimes distinguishes them, but often he completes one by the other. It is in the *Stromata* that his thought is best expressed; it is complex and balanced, strongly affirming the independence and transcendence of Christian truth, but at the same time claiming for hellenic philosophy a rôle which is doubtless secondary and preparatory, but is nevertheless a beneficial one. We will venture to transcribe here a somewhat lengthy passage, in which we get, in its light and shade, the whole conception of Clement, with its boldness and its reserve:

When several men row a boat, we do not say there are many causes, but one only, composed of many forces. . . . Such is the function of philosophy in the attaining of truth. Being a search for the truth, it is not the cause of its attainment, but it concurs in this and co-operates in

⁵³ Cf. *supra*, p. 825.

⁵⁴ To get some idea of this, it will suffice to run through the notes and tables in the edition of Staehlin.

⁵⁵ On these two aspects, see De Faye, *op. cit.*, ch. V (pp. 174-191) and VI (pp. 192-200).

it with others. . . . There is only one truth, but many things combine in its seeking, and it is through the Son that we find it. When the matter is properly considered, we see that virtue is one in potency, but we call it, according to its objects, here prudence, there temperance, and elsewhere force or justice. In the same way, truth is unique; and yet in geometry there is geometrical truth, in music, musical truth; and so, in philosophy there is philosophical truth, and this is the hellenic truth. But there is only one principal truth, beyond our reach, and that is the Son of God, who teaches it to us. . . . And although philosophy concurs from a distance in the discovery of truth, tending by different conceptions to that which immediately attains to the truth, that is, human knowledge, it assists only one who by his own reason tries to attain to gnosis. Also, the hellenic truth differs from our own truth, although it bears the same name, by the extent of knowledge, the force of the demonstration, divine power, and by many other like qualities. For we ourselves are disciples of God, formed by the Son of God in truly sacred Scriptures, and hence souls are quite differently affected, and by a quite different teaching. If the tricks of our adversaries compel us to make distinctions, we say that philosophy concurs and co-operates in true apprehension, being itself the search for the truth and the education preparatory to gnosis; and we do not regard this concursus as a cause, or attribute to this co-operation a necessary and indispensable efficacy, seeing that almost all of us have been touched without such encyclopædic formation, and some even without a knowledge of letters, by divine and common philosophy; it is by power that we have received from God the word of faith, having been taught by a word which is efficacious of itself. . . . And yet formerly philosophy justified the Greeks of itself. Of course, it did not give them complete justice, for it could only co-operate in this: it is like the first and second step for one who desires to ascend to the upper floor, or like grammar for one who wishes to study philosophy; one deprived of it would not thereby lose the whole Logos, or the possession of the truth. Sight likewise plays a part in the perception of the truth, and hearing, and the voice, but it is only the intelligence that attains to it by nature. But of these secondary causes, some have more virtue and others less. Clearness of mind serves for the transmitting of the truth; dialectics helps to prevent one from falling into the snares of heresies; the discipline of Our Saviour is perfect and sufficient, being the power and wisdom of God; hellenic philosophy, in combining with it, does not make the truth more powerful, but makes powerless the sophistical attacks directed against it (*Strom.*, I, xx, 97, 1-100, 1).

This long passage sets forth, better perhaps than any other, Clement's conception. The question he discusses is a vital one to

him: faced with impassioned opponents who maintain that "philosophy is an evil invention of the Devil for the purpose of poisoning the life of mankind,"⁵⁶ he himself becomes excited, and sometimes his language goes beyond his real thought: philosophy would be a third Testament, comparable to the Law, given to men to teach them justice;⁵⁷ further, it would be of itself a principle of justification. Isolated from their context,⁵⁸ these affirmations may surprise us and seem to be bold paradoxes; in point of fact Clement himself realised their exaggerated character, and took care to modify them.⁵⁹

Function of Philosophy

Merely by reading again the passage quoted above, a reader will notice the reservations made by Clement in enunciating a thesis which, without them, would be over-bold and exaggerated. Philosophy concurs in the discovery of truth as a distant preparation, which does not suffice to assure us of its possession, and is not even an indispensable preparation. The proof of this is that the majority of Christians have arrived at the Faith without having known hellenic philosophy, and some even without a knowledge of letters. If we compare this philosophy to Christian truth, we see that the latter is altogether transcendent "in the extent of knowledge, by the efficacy of the demonstration, and by a divine power."⁶⁰

Once these essential truths have thus been firmly safeguarded, Clement ascribes to hellenic philosophy great privileges. The first and chief privilege is that it is "the philosophy,"⁶¹ so much so that he does not contemplate the existence of any other human philosophy. He does indeed speak occasionally of "philosophy according

⁵⁶ *Strom.*, I, 1, 18, 2. Cf. also *Strom.*, VI, viii, 66, 1; *Strom.*, VI, xvii, 159, 1; *Strom.*, I, xvii, 81, 4.

⁵⁷ *Strom.*, VI, v, 42, 1; VI, viii, 67, 1. Cf. *Strom.*, VI, xiii, 106, 3.

⁵⁸ It is a pity that they are thus presented by De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-177.

⁵⁹ We have seen this in the passage quoted above. After saying "philosophy justified the Greeks of itself," he added "Of course, it did not give them complete justice; it can only co-operate in this. . . ." Similarly he says: "Philosophy was given to the Greeks as a testament which belonged to them specially" (*Strom.*, VI, viii, 67, 1), but he adds at once: "it is like a lower stage by which we arrive at philosophy according to Christ."

⁶⁰ On this transcendence of the Christian revelation, cf. Lebreton, *La théorie de la connaissance religieuse chez Clément d'Alexandrie*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 461 et seq.

⁶¹ "In philosophy there is philosophical truth, and this is the hellenic truth."

to Christ," but then, as he expressly says, he is thinking of "a quite different discipline" by which "we are disciples of God, formed by the Son of God in truly sacred Scriptures." He also allows that all men, even without the advantage of the Christian revelation, and even without the aid of philosophy, can arrive at a knowledge of God.⁶² But, previous to the Christian revelation, some men, *i.e.*, the Greek philosophers, were able to organise a system of religious and moral truths. He adds: "I call philosophy, not the Stoic, nor the Platonist, nor the Epicurean, nor the Aristotelian system, but all that has been well said in each school, every religious science which teaches justice, all this eclectic whole I call philosophy."⁶³ This eclecticism was then very widespread, but what is peculiar to Clement is his justification of it: "I cannot recognise divine teaching in the deformations which have been introduced into human reasoning."

The principle which underlies all these theses is that everything that is good comes from God,⁶⁴ and accordingly, philosophy. But Clement adds at once: "God gives it to us, not as the main object he has in view," but as an accessory. It is a seed which the Logos scatters over all the earth and which can bring forth good or evil fruit, according to the character of the land, just as rain produces very different results when it descends "upon fertile fields, or on dunghills, or on houses."⁶⁵ The same idea is repeated in a different form in the sixth book of *Stromata*. Once more Clement distinguishes between the essential objects of the Divine Providence, and those which are only accessories. From the former, as from the head, the blessing of God spreads over all the others, as over the hair and the clothing, just as the oil ran down on Aaron's beard and on to the fringe of his vestment. Aaron is the High Priest, the Logos; the vestment is philosophy.⁶⁶

⁶² Cf. article referred to in n. 60, and *Strom.*, V, xiii, 87, 2: "We always find in all upright men the natural manifestation of the one almighty God, and the majority receive from divine Providence an eternal blessing, or at least those who have not impudently rejected the truth. . . ."

⁶³ *Strom.*, I, vii, 37, 6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, I, v, 28, 2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, I, vii, 37, 1. Θεόθεν ἤκειν εἰς ἀνθρώπους οὐ κατὰ προηγούμενον. . . Here once more, De Faye, in reproducing the text of Clement (*op. cit.*, p. 178 and n. 2), has omitted the reservation which modifies it.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, VI, xvii, 163, 1-4. Clement repeats here the essential word of the preceding passage ἡ πρόνοια ἀνωθεῖ ἐκ τῶν προηγούμενων εἰς πάντας διήκει. He emphasises it by the final words. "Philosophy does not form a part of the people, it is external to it, as a vestment (is to the body)."

All this brings out at once the boldness and the reserve in Clement's thought: to say that philosophy comes from the devil is to insult, not only philosophy, but also God, the one source of all good. Even so, we must carefully note that this blessing is, in the eyes of God, only an accessory one, and that this help is only by way of preparation and an auxiliary. It is, as it were, the overflow of an immense Goodness which pours itself out over the world, and which mankind is able to use, but also to misuse.

If we compare this conception with that which Justin sketched out in his second *Apology*,⁶⁷ we observe a great progress. In both cases, these truths scattered over the human race are regarded as seeds of the Word; they come from the same source as the Christian revelation, but they are very inferior to the latter. Justin represents them as fragments of the complete truth which has come to us in Jesus Christ; Clement dwells much more on this comparison, and makes it clearer. Leaving aside the spatial metaphor of the fragments and the whole, he shows that the Christian revelation is the essential object aimed at by God, *προηγούμενον*, and that all the rest are accessories and preparations which lead man towards this fundamental truth, and help him to grasp it better. Such is the function of philosophy for mankind.⁶⁸

Just as philosophy has been, as it were, a preparatory training for Christianity for the human race as a whole, so also it has fulfilled this office for Christians. To show this, Clement borrows from Philo the allegorical interpretation of the history of Sara and of Agar;⁶⁹ Abraham is the just man united to wisdom, symbolised by Sara, and to encyclopædic knowledge, represented by Agar. Sara is at first sterile, and Agar has to give Abraham his children. Now, as

⁶⁷ Cf. Bk. II, p. 551.

⁶⁸ In this conception, the truths which philosophy teaches and transmits come, as we have said, as a gift from God. Clement likes to represent this gift as a seed coming from the Logos (*Protrept.*, vii, 74, 7); certain people, whom he does not name, attribute the inspiration of philosophy to inferior powers (*Strom.*, I, xvi, 80, 5; cf. *ibid.*, xvii, 81, 4). This thesis, here set aside, is repeated later in another form: philosophy comes from the Logos, but it was given to the Greeks through lower angels (*Strom.*, VII, ii, 6, 4); cf. art. mentioned, pp. 466-467. Together with this conception, we find another, which was familiar to the earlier apologists, but which we are surprised to find in Clement: these truths came from the Bible, and were borrowed from it by the philosophers; Bossuet (*op. cit.*, pp. 205-218) regards this thesis of borrowings from the Jews as an indication of an earlier source. On this conception in the apologists, cf. Bk. II, pp. 552, 572.

⁶⁹ *Strom.*, I, v, 30, 3-32, 3. Cf. Philo, *De congressu eruditionis gratia*, lxxvii et seq.

Clement repeats after Philo, "the part played by the encyclopædic sciences in respect of philosophy is also the part played by philosophy itself in the acquisition of wisdom."⁷⁰ Elsewhere he compares philosophy to a wall protecting the enclosure of truth and preventing it from being trodden under foot by the sophists.⁷¹ Then, setting aside all these symbols, he thus expounds his thought:

We say, then, to speak without figure, that philosophy comprises the search for the truth and the nature of things. It was of this truth that the Lord said: "I am the Truth." We say moreover that it prepares for repose in Christ; it exercises the mind, it arouses the intelligence, and gives it the penetration whereby it will be able to carry on the search, thanks to the true philosophy, and when we have found it, or rather when we have received it from the Truth Itself, we possess it.⁷²

Apart from this educational function, philosophy has another: it develops and illuminates the faith. "Just as we say that it is possible to be a believer even if one is illiterate, so also we recognise that it is impossible without science to understand the whole content of the faith."⁷³

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 30, 1. Cf. Philo, *ibid.*, lxxix.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, I, xx, 100, 1. Same figure in *Strom.*, VI, x, 80, 4. Here again Clement follows Philo, *De agricultura*, xiv et seq. Philo in turn had borrowed this figure from Plato (*De republica*, VII).

⁷² *Ibid.*, I, v, 32, 4. Cf. *Strom.*, VI, x, 83, 2: "Although the truth which is manifested in hellenic philosophy is only partial, the real truth acts like the sun which illumines the colours, white and black, and makes them visible; thus philosophy confounds the apparent reasonings of the sophists." Other similar texts will be found in De Faye, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-196.

⁷³ *Strom.*, I, vi, 35, 2. The reason he gives in this place is that without science one cannot discern what is to be received and what set aside: hence philosophy acts here also as an instrument of discernment rather than as an instrument of discovery. The same question is considered at greater length in *Strom.*, V, throughout the first chapter. This deals with the Faith; and in many passages Clement assigns a part to science in the development of the Faith. "The common faith is at the base as a foundation . . . ; excellent faith is raised above; it is perfected in the believer, and is completed with (the faith) which comes from knowledge and the fulfilling of the precepts of reason. Such were the apostles, of whom it is said that faith was strong enough to move mountains and to transplant trees" (V, ii, 5-6). "We say that faith must not be idle or isolated, but it must be associated with research and progress. . . . The intuition of the soul must tend towards discovery, and at the same time we must remove all obstacles, the spirit of contention, of jealousy, of deceit" (*ibid.*, II, 1-4). But even more important than the intellectual effort is the love of God: "God is love, He is known by those who love; God is faithful, teaching makes Him known to the faithful. We must resemble Him by divine love, so that like may be contemplated by like, listening to the word of truth sincerely and purely, as our children are

Our study has shown us in Clement an ever lively sympathy for Greek philosophy: he had himself been formed in it, and remained grateful for this. But all this hellenic past was now far removed from him;⁷⁴ he has been seized by a new force, which is carrying him much farther and higher. A rapid study of the *Stromata* will make this clear to us.

The Word as Revealer

The first feature which wholly distinguishes Clement from Plotinus is the office which the Christian theologian attributes to the Logos, the Word of God. It is through the Word that all revelation comes to us: such is the thesis continually enunciated by Clement. We have found it in the *Protrepticus*, and the *Paedagogus*; it is often returned to in the *Stromata*.⁷⁵ Clement has just shown that the knowledge of God has to be taught to us. But who is to do this? Mankind cannot do it, and even the angels cannot reveal God to human beings.

Since the unproduced Being is unique, the all-powerful God, his firstborn is also unique, . . . and is the one whom all the prophets call Wisdom, He is the Master of all created beings, the Counsellor of God who has governed all things by his Providence. He it is who, from the beginning, from the first creation of the world, has instructed (us) in many ways and in many forms, and He also completes his teaching. That is why He rightly says: "Call no man your master on earth." Thou seest the prizes of true philosophy.⁷⁶

This Master is in men's hearts as a seed of truth; he is symbolised by the grain of mustard seed, by the seed of the sower, and by the

obedient to ourselves" (*ibid.*, 13, 1-2). On this subject, the following are of interest: P. Camelot, *Les Idées de Clément d'Alexandrie sur l'utilisation des Sciences et de la Littérature profane*; *Clément d'Alexandrie et l'utilisation de la Philosophie grecque*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXI, 1931, pp. 38-66, and 541-569.

⁷⁴ If one wants to realise how far removed it is, read J. Meifort, *Der Platonismus bei Clemens Alexandrinus*, Tübingen, 1928. The writer shows how the Platonist metaphysic is transformed by Clement into a religious speculation.

What is true of philosophy is still truer in the case of the Mysteries. The use of the terminology of the Mysteries was traditional at Alexandria, and it was already clear in Philo. Cf. Bréhier, *Philon d'Alexandrie* (Louvain, 1924), pp. 73-80. In Clement also, the Mysteries play a great part, but in expression rather than in thought. Cf. Mayor, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-1x, *Clement and the Mysteries*.

⁷⁵ Cf. in particular *Strom.*, VI, vii, 57.

⁷⁶ *Strom.*, VI, vii, 58, 1-2.

heaven.⁷⁷ It is He who, as we have seen, has given to mankind the partial intuitions of philosophy;⁷⁸ He is also the revealer of the two Testaments.⁷⁹

In this doctrine we recognise an echo of the previous tradition. St. Justin had already contrasted the complete Logos which has appeared in Jesus Christ with the partial Logos whose seeds are scattered amongst the human race, not only in the chosen people but also in hellenism. St. Irenæus likewise had attributed all revelation to the action of the Word of God. At the same time it must be allowed that it is Justin we recognise here rather than Irenæus, and a Justin whose ideas have been widened, and whose philosophy has become more mystical and more ardent.

On the other hand, the strong relief which the Incarnation has in the theology of Irenæus disappears here. The Son of God is the sole Master, inasmuch as He is the divine Logos, rather than as incarnate. Even to-day, the Christ acts in us much more by his intimate action than by the transmission of his doctrine as taught in the Gospel and set forth by the Church.⁸⁰

The Church

The office of the Church is rather difficult to define.⁸¹ One thing is clear: Clement loves the Church as a mother. This filial veneration appears in the *Paedagogus*,⁸² and the text we have already quoted from it is by no means singular.⁸³ An office of this kind, maternal and salutary, can belong only to a Church which is living and real. We have already said that this Church does not lose itself, as does that of the Gnostics, in dreams of the Æons of the Pleroma; it lives and functions here below. At the same time it must be admitted that this earthly Church is usually described as

⁷⁷ *Paedag.*, I, xi, 96, 2; *Strom.*, IV, vi, 31, 5; *Strom.*, V, xii, 80, 8.

⁷⁸ Cf. above, p. 913, n. 68.

⁷⁹ *Strom.*, II, vi, 29, 2.

⁸⁰ On all this, cf. article referred to, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 465-469.

⁸¹ Cf. Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, pp. 305-316; *Recherches de Science religieuse*, art. mentioned, pp. 470-478.

⁸² Cf. *supra*, p. 905.

⁸³ Cf. *Paedagog.*, I, v, 21; 1: "As a mother consoles her little children, so will I console you. The mother leads her little children, and we seek for our mother, the Church." *Ibid.*, I, vi, 27, 2: "Just as the will of God is an action, and is called the world, so its intention is the salvation of men, and this is called the Church."

the image of the heavenly one, and that it is this ideal Church, "the Church on high," which is more often the subject of Clement's thought in the *Stromata*.⁸⁴

This is not surprising if we remember the constant aspirations of his soul towards the heavenly world, "the holy mountain of God, the Church on high, in which are gathered together the philosophers of God, the Israelites, the pure in heart, in whom there is no guile."⁸⁵ Yet, in spite of this impatience of a contemplative soul continually directing its gaze towards heaven, we also find, at least in Book VII of the *Stromata*, very clear texts concerning the visible Church, which is older than all the heresies and the sole depository of the authentic tradition of the apostles. Thus:

It is evident that these younger heresies, and those which are still more recent, are novelties and alterations in respect of the older and truer Church. After what has been said I consider it is manifest that there is only one true Church, that which is really old and to which the truly just belong. As God is one and the Lord is one, that which is supremely venerable will also be praised as being one, thus imitating its source which is one. It is thus bound up with the nature of unity, this Church which is one, and which the heretics endeavour to divide up into many heresies. Hence, in substance, in idea, in principle, in excellence, we say that the ancient and Catholic Church is one in the unity of the one faith, which is according to the Testaments which belong to her, or rather according to the one Testament which, in different times, by the will of the one God and the one Lord, unites together all the elect, all those whom God has predestined having known them already before the creation of the world as the ones to be just. The excellence of the Church, like the principle of its constitution, is in its unity, and she is above all the other things, for there is nothing similar nor equal to her.⁸⁶

We cannot help noticing in this text the insistence with which unity is affirmed: the unity of God, the unity of the Lord, the unity of the Faith, the unity of the Testaments or rather of the Testament, and the unity of the Church. We have found these strong affirmations already in Irenæus and Tertullian; we shall find them again in Origen: everywhere we find the same Catholic reac-

⁸⁴ *Strom.*, IV, viii, 66, 1; IV, xxvi, 172, 2; VI, xiv, 108, 1; VII, ii, 29, 3; VII, vi, 32, 4; VII, xi, 68, 5. Texts collected together in the article already mentioned, pp. 470-471.

⁸⁵ *Strom.*, VI, xiv, 108, 1.

⁸⁶ *Strom.*, VII, xvii, 107, 2-6. Cf. Batiffol, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

this already here below becomes the equal of the angels. Hence after this supreme progress in the flesh, being continually transformed, as it meet, from better to better, he goes forward in the paternal fold towards the dwelling which is truly that of the Lord, passing through the seven holy spheres, to be, so to speak, a light which is fixed and remains eternally and absolutely unchangeable in every way.⁹⁴

We notice at the end of this passage a perspective opening out on the future life. This is because the profound distinction which separates here below the gnostic from the simple believer, is consecrated by death. In the next world there are two folds, one reserved for the gnostics, and the other open to the simple faithful who, although saved, suffer from the inferiority of their lot, and find in this their greatest sorrow, "that of not being with those who are glorified for their justice." Clement does not shrink from applying to them the text of the *Book of Wisdom*: "They will see the end of the wise . . . and they shall say: 'These are they whom we had some time in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints.'"⁹⁵

This brings home to us the danger of these exalted spiritual ambitions: the gnostic indulges in dreams of a separate beatitude in the other world which will compensate him for the contempt with which he is regarded here below by the simple faithful. We need hardly add that these features have not been retained in the Church's teaching. And it is not surprising that Rome has not recognised Clement as one of its doctors, and that we cannot ask with Fénelon: "What Catholic theologian will dare to reject the authority of St. Clement?"⁹⁶

⁹⁴ *Strom.*, VII, x, 57, 3-5. We reproduce only the most interesting part of this text, which will be found quoted at greater length and commented on in the article already mentioned, pp. 480-482. Cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 270-275, and the notes by Hort in his edition of the seventh book of the *Stromata*.

⁹⁵ This severe comment could be understood if we could interpret it of a temporary expiation or a purgatory. But Clement sees in it a pain which will last for ever: "Even though the punishment required for the expiation of faults and by personal purification will come to an end, there remains always to those who have been judged worthy of the second fold the greatest pain of all, that of not being with those who are glorified for their justice." This whole text, from which we have here quoted only a few words, is very important: *Strom.*, VI, xiv, 108-114. Cf. art. mentioned, pp. 482-483, and Bk. IV.

⁹⁶ *Le Gnostique*, p. 247.

This reserve, however, must not make us forget all we owe to the master of the Catechetical School. Passionately imbued with the desire to know God, he devoted his whole life to the search of this supreme good; he has carried along with him not only his immediate disciples at Alexandria and the East as a whole, but also those who to-day still read his works.

BOOK IV

*The Church in the
Third Century
Part II*

NIHIL OBSTAT.

EDUARDUS CAN. MAHONEY, S.Th.D.
Censor deputatus

IMPRIMATUR

✠ E. MORROGH BERNARD
Vic. Gen.

WESTMONASTERII
die 16a Januarii 1947

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

This fourth and last book of The History of the Primitive Church deals with the period which begins in the middle of the third century and ends with the Peace of Constantine in 312. The principles governing citations from the Scriptures and ecclesiastical writers are the same as for previous volumes. Notes within brackets have been added on my own responsibility. At the end of the volume will be found an Index to the whole work.

These four English books correspond to Volumes I and II of the monumental Histoire de l'Eglise planned under the editorship of Fliche and Martin. Eight French volumes have so far appeared, and in view of the favourable reception accorded to my translation of the first two, constituting the present work, a beginning has now been made of the translation of other volumes. The English version of the French third and fourth volumes, and possibly of the fifth also, will appear in due course, under the title The Church in the Christian Roman Empire. It has been written by a new group of authors, and will accordingly be treated as a new and independent work.

ORIGEN¹*Importance of Origen's Work*

IN THE whole of Christian Antiquity, at least in the Eastern Church, there is no writer who is so attractive, whose glory is so disputed, or whose study is so difficult, as Origen. He was praised during his lifetime by saints like Alexander of Jerusalem and Gregory Thaumaturgus, but he was condemned by his own bishop and expelled from his church. After his death, he had enthusiastic defenders among the greatest saints and the most illustrious doctors, and yet his teaching was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 553 in a decision which was confirmed by Pope Vigilius. To-day we possess only some portions of his immense work, and the greater part of it has come down to us only by means of translations, the accuracy of which is by no means certain. In spite of all these difficulties, however, it is not impossible to determine in outline the life, character and thought of this famous doctor.

The study of Origen is of tremendous importance for the history of the third and also of the fourth century. His personal influence radiated not only upon Alexandria but also over the whole East. The sentence passed by Bishop Demetrius, who expelled the already well-known master from the Catechetical School and from

¹ Bibliography.—Editions: Migne's Greek Patrology reproduces the edition of Delarue (Vols. XI-XVI), adding (Vol. XVII) Huet's *Origeniana*; *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller*, 11 volumes published by 1933. Studies: Huet, *Origeniana* (Migne, P.G., Vol. XVII); Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. III, pp. 494-595 in the Venice edition, 1732; Redepenning, *Origenes, Eine Darstellung seines Lebens und seiner Lehre* (Bonn, 1841-1846, 2 vols.); Freppel, *Origène*, Paris, 1888, 2 vols.; J. Denis, *La philosophie d'Origène*, Paris, 1884; F. Prat, *Origène, le théologien et l'exégète* (Collection *La Pensée Chrétienne*), Paris, 1907; A. Harnack, *Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag der exegetischen Arbeiten des Origenes*, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. XLII, 3-4, Leipzig, 1918-1919; E. de Faye, *Origène, Sa vie, son œuvre, sa pensée*, Paris, 1923-1930, 3 vols., cf. D'Alès, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XX, 1930, pp. 224-268, *Origen and his Work*, by the same, English translation of lectures at the University of Upsala in 1925, London, 1926; W. Voelker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes*, Tübingen, 1931; H. Kock, *Pronoia und Paideusis, Studien über Origenes und sein Verhältnis zum Platonismus*, Berlin, 1932; R. Cadiou, *Introduction au système d'Origène*, Paris, 1932; G. Bardy, art. *Origène* in *Dict. de théol. cath.*, Vol. XI, cols. 1489-1565.

Egypt, caused him to go to the churches of Palestine which had long venerated him and which would henceforth be his home, and from thence his influence was to extend over Syria, Asia, Cappadocia and Achaia. The difference in the attitude adopted towards the condemnation of Origen, accepted in the West but rejected in the East, already anticipates the doctrinal divergences which will divide still further and even antagonise the Eastern and Western provinces.

The widespread influence of Origen will not surprise anyone who studies his teaching. In him, theology aims no longer merely at refuting opponents, but also at instructing Christians; it sets out to penetrate revealed truths more closely, and to co-ordinate them in a doctrinal synthesis in which the mind can find a place for all that it believes and all that it knows. To provide a basis for this theological systematisation, so courageous, so rich in fruitful ideas, but at the same time so bold in many of its theses, Origen carried out during his whole life an immense exegetical work: he produced an edition of the Hebrew text of the Bible and its Greek versions, a learned commentary, and popular homilies. Then he crowned his already fruitful life by writing an apologetical work which is the most complete the ante-Nicene Church has left to us. Even this did not exhaust the work of this indefatigable man: at Alexandria first and then at Cæsarea he was the head and usually the only master of the schools he directed; and to all this he added the labour of preaching, during his last years a daily task. When we study more closely Origen's activity, which aroused the admiration of his contemporaries, we soon realise that it sprang from a soul passionately devoted to God. As a child, under Severus, he had wished to be a martyr like his father; thirty years later by his eloquent *Exhortation to Martyrdom* he gave encouragement to his friends imprisoned and tortured by Maximin; finally under Decius he had the proud privilege of suffering for Christ, and shortly after this glorious confession he died.

The reader will not be surprised if we dwell at some length on a life so full and on a system of thought so fruitful.

§ I. THE CATECHIST OF ALEXANDRIA

On the day following the death of Clement of Alexandria, Alexander of Jerusalem wrote thus to Origen: ". . . We knew

those blessed fathers who preceded us and with whom we ourselves shall soon be: Pantaenus, the truly blessed master, and also the venerable Clement, who became my own master and assisted me and possibly others. Through these I came to know you, altogether excelling, my master and my brother.”² This piece of information is important: it shows us that Origen was regarded by Alexander of Jerusalem about the year 215 as his master and friend, the successor to the venerable teachers Pantaenus and Clement but greater than these. This testimony coming from a most credible witness tells us something which we do not learn from Origen himself: Pantaenus and even Clement are scarcely named at all in his work, but he continued their activity and their teaching.

Parentage and Education

In his parentage and education, Origen differed greatly from his master. Clement was doubtless an Athenian; Origen was the first Egyptian, as far as we know, to become a Father of the Church.³ Clement was born and grew up in paganism; from his cradle Origen was a Christian. His father Leonides was very careful to bring him up in a knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, and the child displayed a precocious curiosity in this respect.⁴ Under Severus, Leonides was arrested; Origen himself was so full of desire for martyrdom that his mother was able to hold him back only by hiding his clothes. Not being able to join his father, the child exhorted him to remain firm: “Take care,” he wrote, “not to adopt a different attitude for our sakes.”⁵

² *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 8-9.

³ His very name (“Origen, son of Horus”) links him up with the Egyptian mythology. His surname, “Adamantius,” has often been thought to have been given to Origen because of his strength of mind, but it seems to have been his actual name (*Eusebius, Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 10).

⁴ “Leonides in his presence reprimanded him, exhorting him not to seek things above his age or to seek beyond the obvious meaning. But in private he greatly rejoiced, and gave great thanks to God, the source of all good things, because he had thought him worthy to be the father of such a child. It is said that often at that time he went to his child while he was asleep, uncovered his breast, and kissed it respectfully as though the holy Spirit had consecrated it within, and considered himself happy to be his father” (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, ii, 9-11). These details and many others have been transmitted to us by Eusebius, who expresses also his own veneration: “As regards Origen, the very linen of his cradle seems to me to be worthy of memory” (*Ibid.*, VI, ii, 2).

⁵ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, ii, 5-6.

The Catechist

Leonides was beheaded and his goods confiscated. Origen, then seventeen years old, remained with his mother and his six younger brothers.⁶ In order to support himself and the family, he began to teach. The persecution had destroyed the Catechetical School, but Origen restored it, first on his own initiative and then at the orders of Bishop Demetrius. The young master, who came thus to replace Clement, was then eighteen years of age. The post was an honourable one, but it was not without its dangers, for the persecution begun by the edict of Severus (202) was still raging, threatening especially the converts and their masters. One pagan, Plutarch, converted by Origen, died a martyr's death, encouraged to the end by his master; he was followed by others still in the catechumenate or else neophytes.⁷ Origen "assisted the martyrs not only when they were in prison and while they were being interrogated, until their final sentence, but even afterwards, when they were being led to death. . . . It often happened that when he courageously stepped forward and saluted the martyrs with a kiss, the pagan crowd became very angry and would have rushed upon him; fortunately on each occasion the hand of God came to his assistance and he escaped miraculously."⁸

These heroic times left an indelible trace upon Origen's memory, and he recalled them towards the end of the long period of peace which preceded the Decian persecution:

That was a time when people were really faithful, when martyrdom was the penalty even for entrance into the church, when, from the cemeteries whither we had accompanied the bodies of the martyrs, we entered immediately our meeting places, when the whole Church stood unshakable, when catechumens were catechised in the midst of the martyrdom and deaths of Christians who confessed their faith right to the end, and when these catechumens, overcoming these trials, adhered fearlessly to the living God. Then it was that we remember seeing

⁶ A rich Christian lady received him; she gave hospitality also to a heretic of Antioch named Paul. "But Origen, who was obliged to come into contact with him, already gave striking proofs of his own zeal for orthodoxy: though a great number not only of heretics but also of our own people flocked around Paul because he seemed to be learned, Origen himself would never consent to join with him in prayer" (*Ibid.*, VI, ii, 14).

⁷ Eusebius mentions Serenus, Heracles, Hero, another Serenus, and two women, Heraïs and Potamiana, whose martyrdom was especially glorious (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, iv and v).

⁸ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, iii, 4.

astonishing and marvellous wonders. Doubtless the faithful were then few in number, but they were truly faithful, following the straight and narrow path which leads to life.⁹

In this School, which was thus a preparation for martyrdom, life was poor and hard: the master taught by example, by necessity, and still more by his ascetical life. Entrusted by the bishop with the whole of the catechetical instruction, he abandoned the teaching of profane letters and sold the manuscripts in his possession for a pension of about sixpence a day. He lived on this sum, leading a most austere life of fasting and vigils, sleeping on only the bare ground, and having only one cloak and no sandals. That was how Origen trained his disciples in the way of Christian perfection and for martyrdom.

In his enthusiasm for the perfect life, Origen unwisely took literally the text in the Gospels which says "there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven" (*Matt.* xix, 12). He was still a young man, and was engaged in preaching the Christian faith not only to men but also to women; he desired by this means to prevent all suspicion, and at the same time he thought that he was carrying out a counsel of the Lord. He kept the matter secret as far as he could; but he informed Demetrius, who, according to Eusebius, admired his courage at the time but later on made it a subject of accusation.¹⁰

Voyage to Rome

After a dozen years of teaching, Origen went to Rome during the pontificate of Zephyrinus, and in his presence Hippolytus gave a discourse in honour of the Saviour.¹¹ It is quite likely that friendly

⁹ *Hom. in Jerem.*, IV, iii.

¹⁰ This act of self-mutilation, condemned by the civil law (Justin, *Apol.*, I, xxix, cf. the note by Otto), was already disapproved of by the Church, and was later on formally condemned (first canon of the Council of Nicæa, cf. note in Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, VI, Vol. I, pp. 529-532). Origen himself wrote later on when explaining this text in Matthew: "If there are other passages, not only in the Old but also in the New Testament, to which we ought to apply the words: 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,' we must allow that they apply especially to this particular text" (*In Matt.*, Vol. XV, 1).

¹¹ St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, lxi, enumerating the works of Hippolytus, wrote: "scripsit . . . de laude Domini Salvatoris, in qua præsentem Origene se loqui in Ecclesia significat." Dollinger mentions this in support of his thesis

relations resulted from this first contact between Hippolytus and Origen.¹² His stay in Rome was, however, of short duration, and the master of the Catechetical School soon returned to Alexandria.

Biblical and Philosophical Studies

The period which followed (218-230) was particularly brilliant and fruitful. Origen was at the height of his powers; he enjoyed the confidence of Demetrius,¹³ and every day saw still more students attending his lectures. These disciples came from everywhere, from the Hellenic philosophies and from the Gnostic sects; they sought from Origen the interpretation of the Scriptures and a knowledge of God. To satisfy all their desires the master felt the need of a deeper study of the Bible and of divinity. Accordingly he learnt Hebrew and he sought out the various Greek versions of the sacred books in order to compare them. At the same time he took up the study of Hellenic philosophy, as he explains in a fragment of a letter quoted by Eusebius: "When I devoted myself to speaking, the fame of our worth spread abroad, and there came to me heretics and those formed in Greek studies and especially philosophers; it seemed good to me that I should examine thoroughly the doctrines of the heretics, and what philosophers profess to say concerning truth."¹⁴

that Origen adhered to the schism of Hippolytus (*Hippolytus und Kallistus*, pp. 255 *et seq.*). Set forth in this form, the thesis is an unlikely one. Cf. Hagemann, *Die Roemische Kirche*, pp. 279 *et seq.*

¹² This was doubtless the cause of a certain misunderstanding between the master of the Catechetical School and the Bishops of Rome who succeeded Zephyrinus. When the question of Origen was raised in Rome by Demetrius, the former had not written to Pontianus so far as we know. But he wrote to Fabian upon his accession; by that time the deaths of Hippolytus and Pontianus had effaced the memory of former disagreements. This enables us to explain why the Bishop of Rome, on receipt of the sentence of Demetrius, called a Roman Synod to discuss Origen's case. The calling of the synod is sufficiently explained by the need for a discussion of the doctrinal complaints, but we can understand it better if the Church of Rome was interested in Origen.

¹³ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, VI, xix, 12. He adds: "I did this following the example of Pantaenus who before us was helpful to many and was very well trained by the Greeks, and also copying Heraclas, who is now one of the priests of Alexandria. I met the latter at the house of the teacher of philosophical sciences, where he had studied already for five years before I myself began to attend these lectures. During this time, Heraclas abandoned the ordinary dress, which he had worn previously, and put on the mantle of a philosopher, which he has retained until

This letter, written in reply to those who criticised Origen's Hellenic studies, constitutes his defence. Even so, we cannot help noticing the distance between this apologia and the reply which Clement had made to similar complaints. Here there is no longer question of a third Testament: philosophy is not the school in which Origen was first educated; if he frequents it, it is for the reason he also associates with members of heretical sects, namely, in order to understand the doctrines with which his new disciples have been imbued. It is of course true that Origen's studies were carried out thoroughly, for he never did things by halves. One who was a competent judge, though not at all sympathetic towards him, i.e. Porphyry, wrote thus concerning him:

In his conduct he lived as a Christian and in opposition to the laws. But in his beliefs concerning the divinity he was a Greek, applying the art of the Greeks to foreign fables. For he was always studying Plato; the works of Numenius, Cronius, Apollonphanes, Longinus, Moderatus, Nicomachus and of those learned in the Pythagorean doctrines constituted his reading, and he made use also of the books of Cheremon the Stoic and Cornutus. It was from these that he learned the allegorical method of the Greek mysteries, which he then adapted to the Scriptures of the Jews.¹⁵

Development of the Catechetical School

Origen could not cope unaided with the work which every day became more absorbing; accordingly he enlisted the aid of Heraclas and entrusted him with the formation of the beginners, reserving

now, continuing to study the books of the Greeks as much as possible." This text is valuable because of the information it gives us concerning Pantænus and especially Heraclas. It describes the latter as wearing the mantle, as Justin and Tertullian had done, and devoting all his time to philosophy.

¹⁵ Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 5-9. Eusebius calls attention to the false statement of Porphyry, who accuses Origen of having been born in paganism and of subsequently abandoning it, whereas Ammonius had passed from Christianity to Hellenism. We cannot discuss here the decidedly obscure question of Ammonius; as for Origen, Porphyry's error is plain, though it is not altogether surprising. Porphyry was born in 232, and could scarcely have met Origen; he could not have had much knowledge of his years of teaching at Alexandria, and still less of his infancy. But we can, at any rate, accept what he tells us about Origen's Hellenic culture. On this, see the thesis of Mme A. Miura-Stange, *Celsus und Origenes*, Giessen, 1926; the author tries to show that the religious philosophy of the two is the same. The thesis is certainly an extreme one, but the comparison between the two writers is not without its value. Cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVII, 1927, pp. 345-347.

for himself the instruction of the more advanced students.¹⁶ This division of the courses in the Catechetical School took place about 215. The young master thus enlisted by Origen had for five years attended the lectures of a philosopher. Thus it was really a professor of philosophy that Origen appointed. The new professor was destined ultimately to become Master in his turn: he took Origen's place at the head of the school in 230, and in 231 became Bishop of Alexandria in place of Demetrius.

Aided thus by Heraclas, Origen redoubled his own activity. One of his disciples, Ambrose, rescued by him from the Valentinian heresy, put his fortune at the service of his master: "More than seven scribes wrote at his dictation and replaced each other at fixed hours; there were also as many copyists, as well as girls accustomed to writing. Ambrose saw generously to the support of all."¹⁷

The object aimed at by the two friends is thus set forth by Origen, writing to Ambrose:

To-day, under the pretext of gnosis, the heretics set themselves up against the holy Church of Christ, and multiply the volumes of their commentaries in which they pretend to interpret the evangelical and apostolic writings. If we ourselves keep silence, if we do not oppose them with true and sound doctrines, they will attract famished souls who, in the absence of healthy nourishment, will seize upon these forbidden foods which are indeed impure and abominable. . . . In your own case, it was because you could not find masters capable of teaching you a higher doctrine, and because your love for Jesus could not abide an unreasoned and common faith, that you formerly gave yourself up to those doctrines which subsequently you condemned and rejected, as was right.¹⁸

This passage reveals to us the fundamental motive of Origen's thought: in this city of Alexandria where Greeks, Jews, Gnostics and Catholics are greedy for religious knowledge, and all think to possess its secret, one cannot content oneself with an "unreasoned and common faith"; the pride of a Christian will not suffer this, nor his "love for Jesus." But from whom is this high religious knowledge to be sought, if not from the Master of the Catechetical School? Clement had realised the indispensable necessity of such

¹⁶ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xv. On Heraclas, cf. *supra*, p. 932, n. 14.

¹⁷ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxiii, 2.

¹⁸ In *Joann.*, V, 8. This passage has been preserved for us in the *Philocalia*.

instruction; he had managed to give an outline of it. But it deserved to be expounded fully, and to this work Origen devoted his life.

The Hexapla and the De Principiis

The task would consist above all of a work of exegesis, for it is in Holy Scripture that God's revelation is mainly found. Origen therefore applied himself to the study of Hebrew, and at the same time prepared an edition of the Hexapla.¹⁹ This great task was but a preparation; once the text had been established, it had to be interpreted, and therein lay the chief task of his life. The earliest commentaries we possess were written at Alexandria: those on the *Psalms*, *Genesis*, and the most important *Commentary on St. John*.²⁰ This indefatigable writer was not content with his exegetical labours: to these he added while still at Alexandria, shortly after 220, the treatise *De principiis*. Many philosophers were then making collections in which they arranged under different headings the chief philosophical theses affirmed in their schools. Origen began a work conceived according to the same plan, but dealing instead with Christian theology. In particular, he aimed at distinguishing between dogmas transmitted by the apostolic preaching, and questions freely debated.

Origen's presentation of the matter is of great interest, both be-

¹⁹ Besides the Septuagint version, three Greek translations of the Bible were in use at that time, those of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion. As a result Christians experienced difficulties in their controversies with the Jews. Origen undertook a transcription of the Bible in six columns: the Hebrew text in Hebraic characters, then the same text in Greek characters, and the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint and Theodotion. The work was begun at Alexandria and completed at Cæsarea. When Origen wrote to Julius Africanus (chap. V) in 240, he was in the middle of his task; when he commented on St. Matthew (*In Mt. comm.*, XV, 14) he had finished it. This work shows that Origen must have been acquainted with Hebrew, but doubtless he possessed only an elementary knowledge of it, which his friends were able to supplement. Cf. *In Gen.* xii, 4: "ut aiunt qui Hebræa nomina interpretantur"; *In Num.* xiv: "aiunt qui Hebraicas litteras legunt."

²⁰ The commentary on Ps. ii, 5 is quoted in the treatise *De principiis*, II, iv, 4; so also the commentary on *Gen.*, I, i, *ibid.*, II, iii, 6. Cf. Cadiou, *Introduction au système d'Origène*, p. 13. The chronology of the works of Origen has been determined carefully by Harnack, *Chronologie*, Vol. II, pp. 37-53, and by Bardenheuer, *Geschichte der altkirchl. Litteratur*, Vol. II, pp. 82-146. The first five books of the *Commentary on St. John* were written at Alexandria, but later than the treatise *De principiis*, which is quoted therein. Cf. Cadiou, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-13.

cause of the principles which guide him²¹ and the conclusions which he reaches.²² If we compare this catalogue with the *Placita* of the contemporary philosophers, we are able to appreciate the value of the religious certitudes which the Christian Faith has brought into the world.

This Preface is followed by four books, in which the principal questions thus announced are discussed. The whole constitutes not so much a methodical treatise as a series of dissertations or lecture-notes on the various subjects: we feel that we are in pres-

²¹ What Origen tried to find out was the common faith of the Church. Cf. Kattenbusch, *Das Apostolische Symbol*, Vol. II, p. 137: "It is difficult to avoid the impression that Origen was seeking to establish, by means of an independent and free study, what was regarded as certain by Christians subject to the Church. As a starting point he had before his eyes the two Testaments, and he asked only what was to be found therein according to the immediate judgment of all Christians in the Church. In this study he naturally directed his attention to the results of the doctrinal controversies, and in particular the refutation of Marcion and of Gnosticism."

²² Doctrines are in general certain or doubtful in the degree in which they have already been settled through controversies or still left undecided. Thus:

(a) On God: Against Marcion and the Gnostics, the identity of the God of the two Testaments has been finally established. The spirituality of God has not yet been defined; it is not doubted by Origen, any more than by Clement. But it was otherwise with some of Clement's predecessors (cf. Vol. III, p. 899), and we find in Egypt some addicted to an anthropomorphic view of God as late as the fifth century.

(b) Jesus Christ was born before all creatures; he was the minister of the Father in the creation; he is truly man.

(c) The Holy Spirit is associated with the Father and the Son in honour and dignity. It is not clear whether he was generated or not. The Holy Spirit inspired all the sacred writers.

(d) The human soul: what is beyond doubt are its personal responsibility and its liberty, and the rewards or punishments which await it. Astrology is condemned. The metaphysical question of the origin of the soul is not dealt with.

(e) Angels and devils. "There are angels and good powers, which serve God for the salvation of mankind; but no one has defined clearly when they were created, or what is their condition." "As to the devil and his angels, and enemy powers, the teaching of the Church tells us of their existence, but does not explain clearly their nature and their manner of being. Most people, however, are of the opinion that the devil was once an angel, and that he involved in his defection a great number of angels, now called his own angels."

(f) The world was created, had a beginning, and will come to an end. What existed before, and what will there be afterwards? The ecclesiastical preaching does not answer these questions clearly.

(g) Are the stars animated? The answer is uncertain.

(h) "The whole Church agrees in saying that the Law is spiritual, but the spiritual sense of the Law is known only by those to whom the Holy Spirit has deigned to grant wisdom and knowledge."

The text here summarised is found in the Preface to the first book, iii-x (edit. Koetschau, pp. 9-16); it is translated into French by F. Prat, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-17.

ence of the efforts of an investigator whose thought is courageous but undecided, and who is aware of this. To the difficulties arising out of this method and this attitude of mind are added, for a modern reader, the uncertainties of the text itself. The greater part of the work has come down to us only in the translation by Rufinus, which was particularly criticised by St. Jerome. If we compare the text as conserved in the *Philocalia* with the translation, we notice that more than half of the text has been omitted in the latter. The other chapters certainly receive better treatment; but it is always prudent not to utilise this translation without testing it if we wish to determine the ideas of Origen on controverted points.²³

Apart from all these doubtful points, what we find underlying the book throughout is the great problem which worried the Gnostics, and which Origen tried with all his might to solve: that of the origin of evil. The Gnostics all tended towards a dualistic solution: Basilides and Valentine had already allowed themselves to be led in its direction; Marcion opened the way to it by his distinction between the two deities; Mani²⁴ will definitely accept it. Origen fully realises this danger, and the whole aim of his thought is to dispel it. Already in the Preface, the freedom of every rational soul is presented as one of the fundamental theses, certified by the teaching of the Church;²⁵ he returns to it on several occasions in the course of the work, and devotes to it a good part of Books II and III.²⁶ This emphasis was justified, and on more than one point Origen gave a useful corrective not only to the gnostic or astrological theses,²⁷ but also to the speculations of his master Clement.²⁸

²³ On the value of Rufinus's translation see the very careful study by G. Bardy, *Recherches sur l'histoire du texte et des versions latines du De principiis d'Origène*, Paris, 1923.

²⁴ Mani was twenty or thirty years younger than Origen; he began to preach about ten years before Origen's death, and died twenty years after him.

²⁵ *Pref.*, v. The emphasis on this is the more remarkable in that the baptismal creed does not mention the doctrine; this is one of the points on which we see most clearly what guided Origen in the drawing up of his catalogue of beliefs.

²⁶ II, ix, 2; III, 1. This long chapter has been preserved for us in the original, in *Philocalia*, ch. xxi.

²⁷ Already, in the catalogue in the Preface, pp. 12-13, we read: "We are not governed by necessity, nor compelled against our will to do good or evil. For if we are free, some powers may perhaps be able to urge us to sin, and others to help us to save ourselves. But we are not at all compelled to do good or evil, contrary to what is maintained by those who say that the courses and motions of the stars are the causes of human actions." Against Astrology, cf. *In Mathæum*, xiii, 6; *Contra Celsum*, V, xxi, and V, xi. The thesis discussed in these passages is that of the astrologers who make human destiny depend on the

The Problem of Human Destiny

At the same time, this reaction went too far, and led Origen into errors which Clement had managed to avoid. These concern, to begin with, the pre-existence of souls. From the time of Plato this idea had led many thinkers astray; it seemed to them to provide the solution of this difficult problem: how can the original inequality of souls be explained without calling in question the equitable Providence of God? Plato had already answered the difficulty by the myth of Er the Armenian, and drew this conclusion: God is not responsible; the soul chose its lot before its birth. Basilides had adopted this hypothesis.²⁹ Clement had rightly set this solution aside.³⁰ But Origen returned to it and remained faithful to it. He did of course reject the Pythagorean metempsychosis, which teaches that human souls pass into the bodies of animals;³¹ he also set aside Plato's hypothesis of a transference of souls from one human body to another.³² But he allowed that all

conjunctions of the stars. But Origen also encountered the opinion of those who attributed to the stars a soul immutably fixed upon the good, e.g. Bardesanes, *Liber legum regionum* (edit. Nau, *Patrologia syriaca*, p. 545) "Observe the sun, the moon, the firmament, and the other creatures which are in some respects greater than we are. they have not received liberty, but all are fixed in such a way that they fulfil only the commandments, and can never depart from them." As Cadiou well points out (*op. cit.*, p. 33), it was to react against such theses that Origen "dwelt at length on the psychology of the stars." In Book I of *De principiis* (vii, 2) he asks whether it is possible to allow such an immutability in creatures, "either in the sun and the stars, as some of our people have thought, or amongst the holy angels, as others of our people have suggested, or lastly in souls, as has been said by heretics."

²⁹ Clement had allowed the immutability of the primeval angels, *Adumbrationes in I. Joann.*, ii, 1: "Hæ namque primitivæ virtutes ac primo creatæ, immobiles, existentes secundum substantiam, cum subjectis angelis et archangelis, cum quibus vocantur æquivoce, diversas operationes efficiunt." He also set forth immutability as the highest point possible in the ascent of the soul: *Strom.*, VII, lvii, 5. Cf. Bk. III, p. 919. He was certainly right in regarding beatitude as incapable of being lost, but instead of recognising that what fixes the soul for ever is its union with God by the Beatific Vision, he imagined a new disposition and, as it were, a new nature, which would make the elect "equal to the angels," "a fixed light, which subsists eternally, in an absolute and complete immutability."

²⁹ Cf. Bk. III, p. 622.

³⁰ *Eclogæ propheticae*, xvii, 1: "We did not exist before God made us. For if one were to accept our pre-existence, we should have to know where we were, and how and why we have come into this world." Cf. Cadiou, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

³¹ *Contra Celsum*, V, xlix; VIII, xxx.

³² *Ibid.*, IV, xvii.

souls are eternal, created by God, and equal to one another,³³ and that the world of sense is for them only a place of purification.³⁴

Just as the starting point of human destiny is wrongly stated, so also the vision of the future is no longer that set forth by the Church. To safeguard the liberty of rational creatures, Origen thinks it necessary to regard them as ever capable of renewal; the sensible world, created by God for the purification of fallen souls, will come to an end when all will have been restored to their original purity.³⁵ Thus, under the influence of divine Providence, the world will end in the triumph of the Good. But after this present world others will follow, the results of new failures, due like the first to the weakness of free creatures.³⁶ Following out the logic of the system, some even came to allow the salvation of the devil: Origen was blamed for this, but he protested that "even an idiot could not hold such a thesis."³⁷

The Hierarchy of Divine Persons

We can easily realise the effects produced by this daring conception of the world and human destiny in the Christian Church at Alexandria. It would attract some, but cause alarm to many others. Other speculations, no less dangerous, were to be found also in the treatise *De principiis* and still more in the *Commentary on St. John*: these concerned the heavenly world and especially the

³³ *De principiis*, II, ix, 6: "Since God is the cause of all created beings, and there is in him neither variety nor change nor impotence, he has created all rational creatures equal and similar, for there was no reason to make them unequal and diverse. But because rational creatures were endowed with free will, this itself has led individuals either to progress by imitating God, or else to fall away by negligence."

³⁴ According to Origen, no nature can live unless it is united to a body, except the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who alone are absolutely incorporeal. But matter is diversified according to the spirits to which it is destined to be united: "when it is destined for inferior spirits, it solidifies and becomes thickened in such a way that it forms the various kinds of matter of this visible world; but when it is put to the service of the higher and happier intelligence, it shines with the brilliancy of the heavenly bodies, and acts as clothing for the angels of God and the sons of the resurrection." (*Ibid.*, II, ii, 2; cf. I, v, 3.)

³⁵ *De principiis*, III, vi, 6.

³⁶ This passage, suppressed by Rufinus, is quoted by Jerome, *Epist. ad Avitum*, x (transcribed by Koetschau, in note on *De principiis*, III, vi, 3, p. 284).

³⁷ Fragment of a letter to his friends, quoted by Rufinus, *De adulteratione librorum Origenis*.

realm of deity. The vital truth that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit transcend all other beings was always affirmed by Origen, and we find it already in the treatise *De principiis*.³⁸ But we must also allow that there is in this treatise a hierarchical conception of the divine Persons which endangers their equality and their consubstantiality.³⁹

³⁸ Absolute immateriality is allowed in no creature, but only in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: II, ii, 2 (cf. p. 939, n. 34); IV, iii, 15. These texts are, it is true, found in Rufinus's translation, but even so they cannot be called in question, for the thesis is a familiar one in Origen. On the other hand, it would be unwise to make use of I, iii, 7; cf. the note by Koetschau, p. 60. Again, the Trinity alone is immutable in goodness: I, v, 3; cf. I, ii, 13; I, vi, 2; *In Num. hom.*, XI, 8 (Rufinus's translation). In *Contra Celsum*, VI, xlv, we find a similar idea, but this is in connection with God, and is not applied precisely to the three Persons of the Trinity: "It is impossible that the good which is accidental and produced should be like to the Good who is goodness by essence." The Greek texts concerning the Son and the Holy Spirit tend to separate these two Persons from the Father, who alone is good: *In Psalm. cxxi*; *De principiis*, I, ii, 12, fragment quoted by Justinian; cf. Jerome, *Ad Avitum epist.*, ii; *In Mt. xv*, 10; cf. also on this text, Huet, *Origeniana*, II, ii, qu 2, 15.

³⁹ In the treatise *De principiis*, this hierarchy is manifested especially in the actions of the divine Persons, which are of unequal extent: "God the Father, containing all things, attains to all beings, communicating to each one the being it possesses as its own. By an action inferior to that of the Father, the Son attains only to rational beings, for he is the second after the Father. By still lesser action, the Holy Spirit acts only on the saints. From this it follows that the power of the Father is greater than that of the Son and the Holy Spirit; that of the Son is superior to that of the Holy Spirit; and that of the Holy Spirit is greater than that of all other holy beings" (I, iii, 3). Cf. *In Isaiam*, fr. (Pamphil., *Apol.*, 5); *Contra Celsum*, VIII, xv: "We, who say that the sensible world belongs to the one who has made all things, affirm clearly that the Son is not more powerful than the Father but is inferior to him. And we say this in obedience to him who said: 'The Father, who has sent me, is greater than I.'"

In consequence of this hierarchical conception, Origen represents the Son and the Holy Spirit as intermediaries between the Father and creatures: *In Joann.*, XIII, xxv, pp. 151-153: ". . . As for us, who believe the Saviour when he said: 'The Father, who has sent me, is greater than I,' and who for that reason did not allow that the word 'good' should be applied to himself in its full, true and perfect sense, but attributed it to the Father and gave him thanks, condemning him who would glorify the Son to excess—we say that the Saviour and the Holy Spirit are without comparison and are very much superior to all things that are made, but also that the Father is even more above them than they are themselves above creatures, even the highest." Cf. Huet, II, ii, 2-7. Maran, in his note (*ibid.*), suggests that the copyists have here omitted a negation. Even if this were the case, we should still have the affirmation of the distance separating the Father from the Son, and the Son from creatures. This idea is found also in the *Commentary on Matthew*, xv, 10, but here the distance between Father and Son is less than the distance between the Son and creatures.

This idea appears in the treatise *De principiis*, in spite of all the corrections made by Rufinus; it is also very marked in the *Commentary on St. John*; it will dominate the whole theological work of Origen, and he will even regard it as the rule governing Christian worship.

This theological speculation, so bold and in many of its features so imprudent, will have its echoes for more than a century in the whole of the East. Some doctors will derive from it a fruitful impulse, others will be deeply upset by it. But at the commencement there was no sign of these controversies. The danger in the Origenist hypotheses was as yet only imperfectly realised; people admired the strength of the work of the scholar and the exegete; they admired still more the sincerity of his Christian fervour, and they had confidence in him.

Journey to Arabia and Palestine

Already Origen's reputation was spreading not only in Alexandria but throughout the whole Church. During the pontificate of Zephyrinus he went to Rome;⁴⁰ shortly after his return to Alexandria he was summoned to Arabia;⁴¹ "A soldier brought letters

From this also arises the distinction between the stages of the highest religious knowledge: after getting to know the Father in his image, that is, in the Son, we shall know him in himself: *In Joann.*, XX, vii, 47; XXXII, xxiv, 359; XIX, vi, 34-39; XIII, iii, 18-19: "This living well, which springs up in the one who drinks the water which Jesus gives, springs up unto life eternal, and perhaps beyond life eternal, to the Father, who is beyond life eternal. For Christ is the life, but he who is greater than Christ is greater than life."

Again, we find this hierarchical conception applied to worship. *De principiis*, I, iii, 4: "The Hebrew says that the two seraphim with six wings described by Isaias, who cry to one another saying 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,' are the one Son of God and the Holy Spirit. And we ourselves think that the text in the *Cantic of Habacuc*, 'Thou shalt be known in the midst of two animals,' refers to Christ and the Holy Spirit." Also *In Isaiam*, hom. I, 2: "Who are these two Seraphim? My Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit." Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 633; *La foi populaire et la théologie savante*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. XX, 1924, pp. 19-33. This Origenist conception of Christian worship will have its echoes in the liturgy. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 27-33.

Lastly, we must mention another Subordinationist conception, more technical in form, but with a very similar significance: the Father is absolute unity; the Son is multiple, at least virtually: *In Joann.*, I, xx, 18; II, ii, 18; II, xviii, 126; VI, vi, 38; I, xix, 121; *Contra Celsum*, V, xxii; V, xxiv; V, xxxix; VI, lxiv. Cf. *infra*, p. 971, n. 68.

⁴⁰ Cf. *supra*, p. 931.

⁴¹ Shortly before 215.

to Demetrius Bishop of Alexandria and to the prefect of Egypt, in which the governor of Arabia requested them to send Origen to him as soon as possible, as he wished to discuss doctrines with him."⁴² Only twelve years had elapsed since the publication of the edict of Severus; and already a sympathetic curiosity towards Christianity was being manifested by high imperial officers. Origen successfully fulfilled his mission, and returned speedily to Alexandria. On his arrival he found the city terrorised and decimated by Caracalla, who had in 215 given it up to pillage following a riot, expelling all foreigners, closing the schools, and forbidding spectacles.⁴³ Ambrose, originally of Antioch, had to depart; he seems to have gone to Palestine, and Origen, doubtless involved in the measures adopted against the philosophers and schoolmasters, accompanied him. The Bishop of Jerusalem at that time was Alexander, a disciple and friend of Clement of Alexandria. We know with what pleasure and indeed with what admiration he welcomed Origen.⁴⁴ Theoctistus of Cæsarea was no less favourable. At the request of the bishops, Origen explained the holy Scriptures in church, in presence of all the people. As he was not a priest, Demetrius made a complaint to his colleagues in Palestine. They sent a fairly sharp answer: Alexander and Theoctistus pointed out that on several occasions already laymen had been invited by bishops to give the homily. Demetrius recalled the master of the Catechetical School to his post; Origen returned to Alexandria and took up once more his accustomed work. This incident was a prelude to the conflict which was to break out some fifteen years later.

At the beginning of the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235), the Emperor's mother, Mammæa, requested Origen to go to Antioch in order that she might consult him on many questions "concerning the glory of the Lord and the divine teaching." Origen passed some time there, expounded to her the Christian doctrine, and then "hastened to return to his accustomed occupations."⁴⁵

⁴² *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 15.

⁴³ Dion Cassius, *Hist. rom.*, lxxvii, 23.

⁴⁴ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxi, 3-4. The sympathetic attitude of Mammæa towards Christianity shown by this action and doubtless developed through the talks with Origen, helps to explain the attitude of the emperor Alexander, then quite a young man and very dependent on his mother. Cf. *infra*, p. 946.

⁴⁵ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxiii, 4.

Ordination of Origen

About 230, Origen was called to Greece; on his way he was ordained priest at Cæsarea by "the bishops of this country." This step, much more serious than the former, aroused in Demetrius an indignation that nothing could appease. Origen was made aware of this as soon as he returned to Alexandria. Eusebius attributes this indignation to jealousy,⁴⁶ but that is evidently a partial view, for Origen belonged both by birth and by his position to the Church of Alexandria, and Demetrius had a right to complain that he had been raised to the priesthood without his knowledge. The irregularity resulting from Origen's mutilation would be another ground of complaint. Finally, there was reason to criticise Origen for temerarious teaching. This last accusation was the most serious of all, and it was against this that the Master of the Catechetical School uttered his chief protest. Some doctrines especially scandalous, such as the salvation of the devil, were rejected by him as calumnies;⁴⁷ other temerities were admitted but explained⁴⁸ as essays which ought to have remained private, and which Ambrose had unwisely published.

The Condemnation

When Origen was thus sending his defence to the Egyptian clergy and to Pope Fabian, he had already had to yield to the storm and had taken refuge in Palestine. A Synod had been called together at Alexandria; it had decreed that Origen was banished

⁴⁶ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, viii, 4-5. St. Jerome mentions this rupture on many occasions, but from a standpoint which varies according to his dispositions towards Origen. In 384, in a letter to Paula, he speaks like Eusebius (*Epist.*, xxxiii, 4); so also in 392 in the *De viris illustribus*, liv. But from the year 400 he brings out another side of the question, i.e. the doctrinal complaints formulated against Origen: in his *Apologia adversus libros Rufini*, II, xviii, he quotes a fragment of a letter in which Origen complains to the clergy of Egypt that he had been falsely accused of blasphemous doctrines and condemned on that account. Cf. Rufinus, *De adulteratione librorum Origenis*. About the same date (400), Jerome wrote thus to Pammachius: "Origen himself, in his letter to Fabian Bishop of Rome, expresses regret at having written such things, and puts the blame on Ambrose, who published things which ought to have remained unpublished."

⁴⁷ In his letter to the Egyptian clergy, quoted by Jerome and Rufinus, *supra*, p. 939.

⁴⁸ In his letter to Pope Fabian (*ibid.*).

from the city, that he could not teach there, or even reside there, but it had not deposed him from the priesthood. Nevertheless Demetrius, supported by some Egyptian bishops, declared him deprived of the priesthood.⁴⁹ The Bishop of Alexandria communicated this sentence to the whole episcopate; the Bishop of Rome, Pontian, called a council, which upheld it; the majority of the bishops did likewise. But the Bishops of Palestine, Achaia, Arabia, Phoenicea and Cappadocia did not adhere to it.⁵⁰

Thus, in this unfortunate conflict there appears already a disagreement between the great churches of the West and those of the East. In Rome and in the whole Western world which Hellenism had influenced for some time but from which already it was withdrawing, the theology of Origen would never succeed in obtaining a footing. In the East, on the contrary, it will exercise a powerful attraction, especially in the third century; in the fourth, Arianism, by seeking support from it, will render it suspect to many Catholics.⁵¹ In this disagreement we must notice the position of the Church of Alexandria: it sides with Rome and the West. This will already foreshadow its attitude when the Arian crisis will break out within its own boundaries.

Shortly after the condemnation of Origen, Demetrius died.⁵² His successor was the priest Heraclas, whom Origen had appointed as assistant, and who after his condemnation had taken his place at the head of the Catechetical School. It seems that Origen tried at this time to return to Alexandria and to take up his teaching once more, but Heraclas upheld the sentence of Demetrius.⁵³

In 247 Heraclas died in his turn, and was succeeded by St.

⁴⁹ That is how the facts are recounted by Photius, *Cod. CXVIII* (Migne, P.G., Vol. CIII, 397), following Pamphilus.

⁵⁰ Jerome, *Epist.*, xxxiii, 4. Jerome does not mention Cappadocia, but the attitude of Firmilian of Cæsarea is a sufficient indication of his loyal attachment to Origen.

⁵¹ But not to all, nevertheless. The great care with which St. Basil and St. Gregory composed the *Philocalia* is a sufficient indication of their attachment to the master. At the same time St. Basil makes reservations concerning the Origenist theology of the Holy Spirit (*De Spiritu sancto*, lxxiii).

⁵² Possibly by the year 230 (cf. Preuschen, art. *Origenes* in *Prot. Real-Encycl.*, Vol. XIV, p. 475) or at the latest in 232.

⁵³ These facts are attested by texts of a late date, but whose agreement is by no means to be neglected: Photius, *Interrogat.*, ix; Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, xxxiv; Theophilus, quoted by Justinian, *Epist. ad Mennam* (Hardouin, III, 263; cf. *Mystagogia s. Petri Alex.*, in Routh, *Reliquæ sacræ*, Vol. IV, p. 81). Cf. Hamack, art. *Heraclas* in *Prot. Real-Encycl.*, Vol. VII, p. 693; Hagemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-285; Bardenheuer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 80.

Dionysius. He, however, took no steps to recall to Alexandria the man who had nevertheless been his own master.⁵⁴ But in the time of the Decian persecution, Origen was to receive, after his painful confession of the Faith, a friendly letter from the Bishop of Alexandria.⁵⁵

These facts enable us to understand better the significance and the motives of the sentence of Demetrius: if his two successors, sometime pupils of Origen, did nothing to recall their master to Alexandria, it must have been because his dismissal was motivated not merely by the personal jealousy of Demetrius, but also by the Church's own interests.

§ 2. THE MASTER OF CÆSAREA

The condemnations pronounced by men who had been most closely connected with Origen—Demetrius, who thirty years before had appointed him head of the Catechetical School, and Heraclas, who had been his disciple and his collaborator—together with the exile which removed him from the Church in which his father had died a martyr's death and in which he himself had taught for thirty years, and the pronouncements against him emanating from the whole world, were to Origen himself a terrible blow. Yet he says little about them in his works, and when he does so it is with moderation. The most explicit passage is found in the *Preface* of the Sixth Tome of St. John:

In spite of the storm stirred up against us at Alexandria, we had completed the fifth tome, for Jesus commanded the winds and the waves. We had already begun the sixth when we were torn from the land of Egypt, saved by the hand of God the deliverer, who had formerly withdrawn his people from thence. Since that time the enemy has redoubled his violence, publishing his new letters, truly hostile to the Gospel, and letting loose upon us all the evil winds of Egypt. Hence reason counselled us to remain ready for combat, and to keep untouched the highest part of ourselves, until tranquillity, restored to our mind, should enable us to add to our former labours the rest of our studies on Scripture. If we had returned to this task at an unseasonable time, we might have feared that painful reflections would bring the tempest right into our soul. Moreover, the absence of our usual

⁵⁴ Feltoe, *Dionysius*, p. xxv.

⁵⁵ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlvi, 2. Cf. *infra*, p. 985.

secretaries prevented us from dictating the commentary. But now that the multitude of heated writings published against us has been extinguished by God, and our soul, accustomed to the misfortunes which come to pass in consequence of the heavenly word, has learnt to support more peaceably the snares prepared for us—now that we have, so to speak, found once more a calm sky, we do not wish to delay any longer in dictating the rest, and we pray God our Master to make himself heard in the sanctuary of our soul, so that the commentary we have begun on the Gospel of John may be completed. May God hear our prayer that we may be able to write the whole of this discourse, and that no further accident may interrupt and break the continuity of Scripture.¹

This moving passage well brings out Origen's great grief, and also his efforts to overcome it and continue his work in peace.² In Palestine he was in friendly surroundings, and protected by bishops who admired him, Theoctistus of Cæsarea and Alexander of Jerusalem, and from thence his fame spread over the whole East.

Persecution of Maximin

The Empire was then in the hands of Alexander Severus. This young emperor displayed towards Christianity not only a wide toleration but also sympathy, and even a superstitious veneration;³ his household, if we may believe Eusebius,⁴ "consisted for the most part of believers."

This growing sympathy in the Empire for Christianity was

¹ *In Joann.*, VI, 1, 8-11. Origen adds that he has begun again the preface to the sixth tome, because he had not been able to bring from Alexandria what he had already written, as his departure had been too sudden.

² We can compare with this passage a fragment of a letter from Origen to his friends, quoted by St. Jerome, *Adv. Rufinum*, ii, 18: "Is it necessary to recall the discourses of the prophets threatening and reprimanding the shepherds and the elders, the priests and the princes of the people? You can find them without our help in the Holy Scriptures, and convince yourselves that our own time is perhaps one of those to which these words apply: 'Believe not a friend, and trust not in a prince' (*Micheas*, vii, 5), and also this other oracle which is being fulfilled in our own days: 'The leaders of my people have not known me; they are foolish and senseless children; they are ready to do evil but know not how to do good' (*Jeremias*, iv, 22). Such men deserve pity rather than hate, and we must pray for them rather than curse them, for we have been created, not to curse but to bless."

³ Dion Cassius, *Hist. rom.*, lxxv, 13; lxxviii, 12. Lambridiu, *Alex. Sev.*, xxii; xxviii; xxix; xliii-xliv; xlix.

⁴ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxviii, 1.

suddenly interrupted. On 18th February, 235, Alexander Severus and his mother were assassinated; in hatred of his predecessor, Maximin persecuted the Christians and applied to this persecution the savage brutality of his character. Close friends of Origen, Ambrose and Protocletos, a priest of the Church of Cæsarea, suffered greatly and courageously confessed the Faith. Origen addressed to them his book *On Martyrdom*; in this moving and lively exhortation we find once again the enthusiasm with which thirty years earlier the son of Leonides had encouraged his father to suffer death.⁵

St. Gregory Thaumaturgus

Origen himself was not affected by the persecution; ⁶ during the three years it lasted (235-238) he continued his teaching at Cæsarea. It was at that time that he numbered amongst his disciples a man who was to be one of the great apostles of the East, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus.

Theodore, who subsequently changed his name to Gregory, was born in Pontus, of a distinguished but pagan family. When fourteen years of age, after the death of his father, he came to know Christianity and accepted it. He wanted to become a lawyer, and set out for Beirut with his brother Athenodorus, in order to study law there. The two brothers took their sister with them as far as Cæsarea, so that she could join her husband, who had been appointed assessor to the Governor of Syrian Palestine. At Cæsarea they heard of Origen and his teaching; they attached themselves to him, and gave up their project of studying law. After five years passed in Origen's school the two brothers returned to Pontus, where both, though still young, became bishops. Before leaving

⁵ Fragments of this work are given in a French translation in Bardy, *Origène*, pp. 296-307.

⁶ Palladius (*Lausiaca History*, cxlvii) narrates that from 235 to 237 or 238 Origen lived at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, hidden in the house of the Christian lady named Juliana. This story is contradicted by the testimony of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus. His *Discourse* was pronounced in 238; he had just followed the teaching of Origen at Cæsarea for five years, and he says nothing of any absence or any interruption. This decisive testimony is confirmed by what Eusebius tells us (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxviii): only the friends of Origen were affected by the persecution; he sent them his book *On Martyrdom*; he spoke of the persecution in Tome XXII of his *Commentary on St. John* and in various letters; if he himself had been the subject of persecution Eusebius would not have failed to say so.

Cæsarea, Gregory addressed to his master a *Discourse* of farewell and thanks.

Origen's Teaching as seen by a Disciple

In this eulogy, pulsating with grateful admiration, the young man tells how he was first won by Origen and then trained by him.⁷ This testimony reveals to us better than all the accounts in Eusebius the pedagogical method of Origen and his incomparable ascendancy. The master was not merely a professor but above all an educator; he transformed the person who gave himself up to him:

When he saw that his efforts were not fruitless, he began to dig the soil, to turn it over, to water it, to rake it over, and to use all his art and all his care in order to work upon us; everything that there was in the nature of thorns, thistles, or evil weeds, and all that our minds produced like a virgin forest, he cut back or extracted by his reprimands and orders; he corrected us after the manner of Socrates, and subdued us by his words if he found us like wild horses, impatient of the bit, rushing off the road, and running hither and thither, until by persuasion or compulsion, curbing us by his speech as by a bit put into our mouths, he succeeded in training us. At first this could not be done without pain and suffering for us; neither custom nor exercise had taught us to follow reason; but nevertheless he went on forming us by his discourses and gradually purified us (vii, 96).

Side by side with this moral training, an encyclopædic teaching was given: all the sciences were laid under contribution, dialectics, criticism, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy (ii-viii). Philosophy crowned this lengthy preparation: the disciples of Origen were to read all the philosophers except the atheists:

He was very careful not to confine us to the study of any one single system; he went through them all, not wishing to allow us to be ignorant of any portion whatsoever of Hellenic science. He himself went before us, holding us by the hand, and we followed in his footsteps. When we came to a turn in the thought in which a fallacy was hidden under deceitful appearances, he used to warn us, as one accustomed to these difficulties by long experience and a constant application to philosophical studies. He was like one who is in a safe place and who

⁷ Migne, P.G., Vol. X, 1049-1104, ed. Koerschau, Freiburg, 1894. [English translation by Metcalfe. S.P.C.K. 1920.—Tr.]

stretches out his hand to others and lifts them up when they are about to be submerged by the waves. Our master acted in that way: he gathered up for our instruction whatever each philosopher had taught that was true and useful, concentrating especially on the things which might develop piety amongst men. On such matters he did not desire us to be attached to any particular philosopher, however wise he might be regarded amongst men, but only to God and his prophets (xiv-xv).

Thus this whole course, encyclopædic and philosophical, was but a preparation for the study of Holy Scripture which for Origen was the most important subject of all, constituting Theology. And here the master expressed himself completely, not only by the richness of his scholarship, but above all by the depth of his religious intuition:

He himself used to interpret the Prophets and clarified all the obscure and puzzling passages such as occur frequently in the holy Scriptures. . . . He clarified and threw light upon all the enigmas he encountered, because he knew how to listen to God and to understand him. One might say that these enigmas presented no difficulty to him, and contained nothing that he did not understand. Of all the men of to-day, of whom I have heard or whom I have known, there has not been one who was able as he was to contemplate the purity of the divine oracles, to receive their light into his own soul, and to teach them to others. This is because the universal Head, he who spoke through the Prophets beloved by God, and who inspires all prophecy and all mystical and divine discourse, honoured him as a friend, and set him up as a master. Through others, he spoke in enigmas, but through Origen he gave the understanding of them, and whatever he, the Master supremely worthy of belief, had by his royal authority ordained or revealed, this he gave to this man to expound, and to explain the oracles, so that if anyone were hard of heart and incredulous or still desirous to learn, he was able to learn from this man and was in a sense compelled to understand and to believe and to follow God. If he did all this, it was in my opinion by the communication of the divine Spirit; for those who prophesy and those who understand the prophets need the same power, and no one can understand a prophet unless the same Spirit who has prophesied give him the understanding of his discourse. That is the meaning of the words we read in the holy books: "He who shutteth can alone open, and none other"—the divine word opens by manifesting those enigmas which are closed. This wonderful gift was received by this man from God; he was given by heaven the marvellous destiny of being to men the interpreter of the words of God, understanding what God says in

the way in which God says it, and expounding it to men in a way that men can understand. Thus, there was nothing inexplicable, hidden, or inaccessible to us; we were able to follow every saying, barbarian or Greek, mysterious or public, divine or human; we were able in all freedom to run through all, to examine all, and to collect together and enjoy all the good things of the soul. Whether it came from some ancient source of the truth or from some other name or work, we drew from it abundantly and with full freedom wonderful and magnificent thoughts. To express the whole matter in brief, all this was for us a veritable Paradise, an image of the great Paradise of God, in which we did not have to work upon the soul below, nor to feed our bodies by fattening them; we had only to develop the riches of the soul, like beautiful plants which we had planted ourselves or which had been planted in us by the Cause of all things, in joy and abundance (xv, 174-183).

This eulogy does honour to the disciple as much as to his master. But at the same time we cannot help noticing a certain exaggeration, whether in the praise of Hellenic philosophy, or in the repeated praise of Origen himself as the unique master and sole interpreter of the Scriptures. Origen doubtless was himself aware of this exaggeration. We have a letter which he addressed to Gregory shortly after the return of the young man to his own country;⁸ we find in it some points which appear to be discreet corrections of the *Discourse*,⁹ especially on the dangers which may be found in the good things of Egypt, and the necessity of prayer to understand the Scriptures. At the end of the letter, Origen gives this exhortation:

As for you, my son, apply yourself above all to the reading of the holy Scriptures. "Apply yourself," I say, for we need great attention when we read the holy books so that we may neither say nor think anything incautious concerning them. Be attentive to the reading of the divine Scriptures, with faith and the intention of pleasing God; knock if the doors are shut, and the porter will open to you, as Jesus said: "The porter will open the door to him." Being thus attentive to the divine reading, seek with an upright heart and a very firm faith in God, the spirit of the holy Scriptures, so often hidden. But do not content yourself with knocking at the door and seeking: the most necessary thing for the understanding of divine matters is prayer. The

⁸ This letter is later than the *Discourse* (238) but earlier than Gregory's elevation to the episcopate (243).

⁹ Cf. Koetschau, *Introduction* to the edition of the *Discourse*, pp. xv-xvii.

Saviour, when exhorting us, did not content himself with saying to us: "Knock and it shall be opened unto you, seek and you shall find"; he also said: "Ask and it shall be given unto you." Because of my fatherly affection towards you I do not fear to speak to you thus. Whether I have done well or not, God and his Christ know, and he who has a part in the spirit of God and the spirit of Christ. May you yourself have part therein, an ever increasing part, so that you may not merely say: "We are become participators in Christ" but also "We are become participators in God."

Apart from these last words, which can hardly fail to give rise to some misgivings, especially when they come from Origen's pen, we can only praise the piety and wisdom of this answer. It corrects with fatherly discretion whatever was incautious in the enthusiasm of the young man. These two documents, placed side by side, clarify each other, and both of them make known to us a pedagogical method of exceptional efficiency.¹⁰

Moreover, it must be carefully borne in mind that the value of the method is dependent entirely upon the worth of the man himself. Like Socrates, whom Gregory recalls, and like Plotinus, who will very soon be teaching in Rome, Origen transformed his disciples still more by his personal influence than by his scholarship. He was not a lecturer who merely appeared from time to time before an audience; he was a master and tutor who lived constantly with his disciples.

The Eastern Bishops and Origen

The admiration of the young disciple for his master shows how great was the latter's influence, and how much he was loved. Several other testimonies confirm this, and they come from the most respected bishops in the East. Among them we find Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia. His authority was great, and soon afterwards Cyprian will invoke it,¹¹ and still later his intervention will be sought against the unworthy Bishop of Antioch,

¹⁰ A good judge has written: "There is no parallel to the picture in ancient times. And when every allowance has been made for the partial enthusiasm of a pupil, the view which it offers of a system of Christian training actually realised exhibits a type which we cannot hope to surpass. The ideal of Christian education and the ideal of Christian philosophy were fashioned together" (*Dict. of Christian Biography*, Vol. IV, p. 102).

¹¹ Cf. Bk. III, p. 865.

Paul of Samosata. Firmilian, who was thus so greatly respected, became a disciple of Origen: "he first of all summoned Origen to Cæsarea for the good of the churches, then he went to be near to him in Judea, and passed some time with him in order to perfect himself in divine things."¹² As for the leaders of the Palestinian episcopate, Alexander of Jerusalem and Theoctistus of Cæsarea, these remained to the end the faithful protectors of the man they had ordained priest: "they attached themselves to him as to a unique master, and they entrusted him with the explanation of the holy Scriptures and with the whole of ecclesiastical teaching."¹³

Thus, while Alexandria expelled him and the West echoed this condemnation, Origen was in the East the object of enthusiastic admiration; he suffered on the one hand from a severity which he considered unjustified, and on the other hand received an admiration which he did not think he had merited. In a Homily on St. Luke, he refers in passing to the excessive honour which the Marcionites rendered to St. Paul by identifying the apostle with the Spirit of Truth. He continues:

We ourselves also suffer from such exaggerations. Many who love us more than we deserve give to our discourses and to our doctrine praises of which we cannot approve. Others calumniate our books and attribute to us opinions which to our knowledge we have never held. Those who love us too much and those who hate us both stray from the rule of truth.¹⁴

§ 3. THE PREACHER AND THE MORALIST

The Homilies

In the midst of these eulogies and criticisms, the priest of Cæsarea carried on his work—not only the task of education and teaching which we have just described, and the writing of books to which we have already referred and of which we shall speak again, but also the work of preaching, which became ever more pressing. The explanation of the Scriptures was given to the people at least twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays;¹ it very soon

¹² *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxvii.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *In Luc. hom.*, xxv.

¹ Socrates, *Hist. eccles.*, V, 22.

became a daily task, and took place even several times a day. The text was sometimes taken from the lessons of the day,² at others it was given to the preacher by the bishops presiding at the meeting,³ or resulted from a request on the part of the listeners.⁴

This assiduous preaching, carried out for such a long period, proves not only the zeal of the preacher himself but also the faithful docility of the Christians. Nevertheless, the preacher complains more than once of those who are absent, and also of those present: many come to the church only on festival days; others listen to the reading of holy Scripture but leave as soon as it is finished without staying for the sermon; those who remain are often inattentive; they carry on in the church their ordinary conversations; they turn their backs at the reading of the Bible and the sermon. "How," says Origen, "can I put pearls in deaf ears and those who turn away?"⁵ He therefore has to reprove his hearers, and he does so, but regretfully and without harshness: "It may perhaps seem very severe, but can I cover with plaster a wall which is collapsing?"⁶

These severities spare no one, whether bishops or priests, or even the preacher himself. In a homily on Genesis, speaking of the priests of Pharaoh, Origen says:

Do you want to know the difference between the priests of God and the priests of Pharaoh? Pharaoh gave lands to his priests; the Lord says to his own: "I am your lot." Pay attention, readers, all you priests of the Lord. . . . Let us hear what Christ our Lord enjoins on his priests: "Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple." I tremble when I say these words, for above all it is myself that I accuse, myself that I condemn. Christ refuses to regard as his disciple whosoever possesses something and does not renounce all that he possesses. What are we doing? How can we read this and expound it to the people, we who not only do not renounce that which we have, but also desire to acquire what we never possessed before we came to Christ? Because our consciences accuse us, are we able to dissimulate that which is written? I do not want to make myself doubly

² In *Num. hom.*, xv, 1; In *Jesu Nave hom.*, xx; In *I Sam. hom.*, ii.

³ In *Ezech. hom.*, xiii, 1.

⁴ In *Num. hom.*, xv, 1.

⁵ In *Gen. hom.*, x, 1; In *Exod. hom.*, xii, 2; *hom.*, xiii, 3. As Delarue points out, these texts of Origen were quoted by Jonas of Orleans, *De institutione laicali*, cap. xiii. Cf. Harnack, *Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag der exegetischen Arbeiten des Origenes*, Leipzig, 1918 and 1919, Vol. I, pp. 68 et seq.

⁶ In *Gen. hom.*, x, 1.

guilty. I confess, yes even before all the people who hear me—I confess that that is written, although I am aware that I have not yet fulfilled it. But at least to-day, after this warning, let us make haste to accomplish it; let us hasten to pass from the priests of Pharaoh who have earthly possessions, to the priests of the Lord who have no part here below, but whose lot is the Lord.⁷

The Religious Ideal

This passage, chosen from amongst many, gives us the note sounded in the homilies of Origen. These are of great importance for the history of exegesis,⁸ and more generally for the history of the Church of the third century.⁹ But they also reveal to us with a moving sincerity¹⁰ the religious aspirations of the priest of Cæsarea. If we link up his oratorical output, which is considerable, with his pedagogical method and his theological labours, we can penetrate his inmost thought, and the elevated religious aims which were the mainspring of his whole life. These aspirations were, as we have seen, expressed also in a metaphysic which contains some dangerous theses; the best disciples of Origen will be able to separate these and put them on one side. In our own rapid survey we shall try to set them forth as Origen himself conceived, lived, and preached them.¹¹

God, who alone is good, created spiritual beings who are good and pure. And yet a glance at the world is sufficient to show that it is corrupt. All these defects have resulted from an original fall; the souls who live in matter must purify themselves while there from faults committed in a previous existence. The original sin consisted in forgetfulness of God; the soul, created by him to contemplate him, allowed the glow of this first contemplation to become dimmed; it defaulted by taking pleasure in itself and allowing itself

⁷ *In Gen. hom.*, xvi, 5. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 70, who mentions a similar statement by a certain presbyter, quoted by Irenæus, *Adv. hæer.*, IV, xxx, 1.

⁸ On Origen's exegesis, cf. Prat, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-167; 174-187; Westcott, art. *Origen* in *Dict. of Christian Biography*, Vol. IV, cols. 104-127; Bardy, art. *Origène* in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, Vol. XI, cols. 1495-1501 and 1505-1509.

⁹ Cf. Harnack, *Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag der exegetischen Arbeiten des Origenes*.

¹⁰ During the last years of his life, from the age of sixty onwards, Origen was sufficiently sure of himself to allow stenographers to take down his homilies without first writing them out himself.

¹¹ Cf. W. Voelker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes*, Tübingen, 1931.

to be led astray by creatures.¹² The aim of all its existence here below is to disengage itself from this multiplicity of things and to recollect itself in order to be united once more to God.¹³

Asceticism

This effort calls for a rigorous asceticism, and Origen does not conceal its requirements. Life is a warfare in which are engaged the soldiers of God and the soldiers of Satan.¹⁴ No neutrality is possible: "Every man endowed with reason is either a child of God or a child of the devil; for either he commits sin or he does not commit it: there is no middle course. If he sins, he is of the devil; if he does not sin, he is of God."¹⁵ In this inevitable and constant warfare, prayer is necessary. It is by prayer that, although we ourselves are quite weak, we are able to vanquish myriads of enemies, visible and invisible, determined upon our destruction, and when through our own fault we sin, we are able thereby to rise up again by repentance.¹⁶ The good things we ought to attain to are beyond our reach; the perfection required of us exceeds our powers; all this we must obtain through prayer.¹⁷

¹² This conception of the Fall, familiar to the neo-Platonists and especially to Plotinus, is found also in Clement and Origen; cf. Cadiou, *Introduction*, pp. 22 and 48-59. "The Gnostic knows that amongst the angels, some have allowed themselves to slip down even to the earth, not having as yet reduced to the only virtuous habit their natural tendency to divide themselves between two objects" (Clement, *Strom.*, VII, xlvi, 6). "All those who share in him who is—and those are the saints—may truly be said to exist; but those who have rejected the participation in him who is, by the very fact of their privation, have become those who are not" (*In Joann.*, II, xiii, 98).

¹³ Cf. *In Joann.*, XX, xxxix, 374: "As long as a man keeps Christ's word, he does not see death, but if he wearies of his care in keeping the word, if he ceases to keep it, he no longer keeps himself, and then he sees death, not in another but in himself. . . . Just as the eyes become dim by looking at darkness, so also death, beheld by one who has not kept the word, makes him die, extinguishes his sight, and blinds him, and he will have to implore the help of him who opens the eyes of the blind." Commenting on *Matt.* xv, 19, he writes (*In Matt. Comm.*, xi, 15): "The source and origin of all sin are evil thoughts; as long as these do not control us there are no murders, adulteries, or anything of the like. We must take every care to guard our hearts, for when the Lord comes on the day of Judgment, he will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts."

¹⁴ *In Ps.* xxxvi, *hom.*, ii, 8.

¹⁵ *In Joann.*, XX, xiii, 107.

¹⁶ *De oratione*, XIII, iii; Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, *Introd.*, pp. 17 *et seq.* Cf. *In Joann.*, X, xxviii, 173: "To see all this and to understand it, there is required that sense of the truth which is given to

To prayer we must join the practice of asceticism. We are aware of the life of poverty and mortification which Origen had imposed upon himself from his youth; he tried to lead his disciples and his hearers along the same road. In this matter especially the prophets were his masters: the life they chose is "difficult to imitate, hard, free, invincible in face of death and danger." Such were Moses, Jeremias, Isaias, "who went beyond all asceticism, living for three years naked and without shoes," and Daniel with the young men who were his companions, who would live only on water and vegetables. Compared with these examples, the strength of Antisthenes, Diogenes or Crates was but child's play.¹⁸

The apostles themselves are also our models, especially St. Paul. He brought his body into subjection; he found strength in his weakness.¹⁹ Christians often ask God to grant them the lot of the prophets and the apostles: let them understand what this prayer means. "Give us to suffer what the prophets suffered, grant us to be hated as the prophets were hated, give us to preach a doctrine which shall make us hated; give us as many trials as the apostles. But to say: 'Give us the lot of the prophets' if we do not wish to suffer what the prophets suffered is an unjust pretence."²⁰

This ascetical tendency is much more prominent than in Clement, and we already see in this doctrine an anticipation of the spiritual rigour of the Fathers of the Desert.²¹ But in Origen as in the latter, asceticism aims only at freeing the soul and enabling it to unite itself to God. That is what a Christian seeks by

those who can say: 'We have the mind of Christ, to see the gifts which God has given us'; we know well that that exceeds our powers, for our understanding is not limpid, our eyes are not such as should be the eyes of the beautiful spouse of Christ, whose husband says: 'Thy eyes are like those of doves.' . . . Nevertheless, in this state we do not hesitate to take into our hands these words which are called the words of life, in order to try to possess the virtue which flows from them to those who handle them with faith." Cf. Cadiou, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

¹⁸ *Contra Celsum*, VII, vii.

¹⁹ *In Matt. Comm.*, ser. 94.

²⁰ *In Jerem. hom.*, xvi, 14. Mortification and asceticism are two of the favourite topics of Origen; many passages concerning them have been collected by Bornemann, *In investiganda monachatus origine quibus de causis ratio habenda sit Origenis*, 1885, pp. 38 et seq., 78 et seq.

²¹ Cf. Bornemann, *op. cit.*, and Voelker, *op. cit.*, p. 61. Origen nevertheless lived in the world, and preached to Christians living in the world; his asceticism aimed at the same end as that of the solitaries, but it had not the inflexible severity of the latter.

observing virginity,²² withdrawing from the world,²³ sacrificing as much as possible the goods of fortune,²⁴ despising human glory,²⁵ detaching himself even from profane sciences and from philosophy, the good things of Egypt in which the true Israelite should not put his trust.²⁶ There are indeed amongst the Greeks some truths which may be utilised, but "we can never find there a wisdom which is not corrupted"; all must be purified before it is utilised;²⁷ we must keep our souls jealously faithful to Christ alone.

This jealous fidelity is especially marked in Origen. He does

²² Virgins and martyrs are the firstfruits of the Church; after these, and in the second place, come those who after contracting marriage have lived in continence: *In Num. hom.*, xi, 3.

²³ He flees the world while living in the world: *In Levit. hom.*, xi, 1. Cf. Voelker, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

²⁴ Here again Origen is more insistent than was Clement (cf. Bk. III, p. 905). This poverty, as we have seen (*supra*, p. 953), is especially required in priests, but it ought to be practised by every Christian who aspires to perfection: *In Levit. hom.*, xv, 2.

²⁵ Jesus has taught us to avoid all human greatness: he fled when they would have made him king: *In Joann.*, XXVIII, xxiii, 209-210.

²⁶ We have pointed out this feature in Origen's letter to Gregory; we find many like passages in his homilies. Origen agrees that we may derive some profit from human sciences, and occasionally make use of them in order to convert others; thus the Patriarchs had children from strange women or from concubines (*In Gen. hom.*, xi, 2). But the one thing which is truly worthy of God is to adhere to these doctrines without ever departing from the rule of truth, and to repeat unceasingly: "There are sixty queens, eighty concubines, and young girls without number, and yet she is unique, my dove, my perfect one" (*In Num. hom.*, xx, 3). Still more characteristic is the interpretation of the story of Achimelech, whom God did not permit to touch Sara. "The name of Achimelech signifies 'the king my father.' Accordingly it seems to me that Achimelech represents here the wise of this world: these give themselves to the study of philosophy, but they do not arrive at the whole and perfect rule of piety; yet they have recognised that God is the father and king of all. As for morals, we see that they have made some effort to reach purity of heart, and that they have sought with all their heart the inspiration of divine virtue, but God has not allowed them to touch it; this grace was reserved for the Gentiles, not by Abraham who, great as he was, was only a servant, but by Christ" (*In Gen. hom.*, vi, 2). The story of Achimelech had been commented on by Philo, *De plantatione*, clxix, and by Clement, *Pædagog.*, I, v, 21, 3, but in a different sense. The passages of Origen on this subject are collected by Harnack, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 39-47, and Vol. II, pp. 89-99; he rightly stresses Origen's severity in contrast with Clement's indulgence.

²⁷ He derives this teaching from a text in *Deuteronomy* (xxi, 10-13) on the treatment of captive women: "Many times I have set forth to wage war against my enemies, and I have found in the booty a beautiful woman. by all this I desire to signify whatever our enemies have said that is good and reasonable: we must purify and detach this from pagan science. . . . Amongst our enemies we do not find a pure woman, for there is no wisdom among them that is not contaminated by some impurity." *In Levit. hom.*, vii, 6.

indeed indicate the errors in philosophical systems, and endeavours to preserve his disciples from them, but above all he is anxious lest they should be led astray by a strange master who would lead them to forget Christ, or at least might lessen the exclusive fidelity which they owe to him. His ideal is St. Paul, and he would wish to say in his turn: "Who shall separate us from the charity of Christ?" He adds: "I can say this in all confidence: neither the love of profane letters, nor the sophisms of philosophers, nor the frauds of astrologers concerning the supposed courses of the stars, nor the divination of demons, full of lies, nor any other science of the future sought by evil artifices, will be able to separate us from the charity of the God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." ²⁸

Union with God

This union with God, preferred above all else, is the term to which the hope and desire of a Christian tend unceasingly. To arrive at this terminus we must travel a long road, full of trials and temptations. Origen finds this journey in the symbol of the crossing of the desert by the children of Israel.²⁹ To begin with, we must enter the desert, leaving Egypt and everything we have upon earth: those alone will have the courage to do this who desire no other lot here below but God. Moreover, it is possible only if we are upheld by Christ "who is our strength," and if we are guided by Moses and Aaron, i.e. faith and the works of worship and all the virtues. Moses himself did not know whither he was going, but "the Lord himself became his guide," for the pillar of fire and the cloud were the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The stages of this journey through the desert are figures of the mystical stages of our spiritual pilgrimage. The Hebrews celebrated the Pasch in Egypt, and the next day set out on their journey: the feasts here below are only shadows: in the desert the Pasch will be a perfect one. We go out of a world which is upset and agitated—that is the meaning of Pharaoh—and we arrive at Sochoth, "the tents," for the soul is now a stranger here below. We cross the Red Sea, and approach the "Bitter Waters": it is a hard trial to cross the sea with its storms, and to hear the noise and booming of the furious waves, but if we follow Moses, the Law of

²⁸ *In Judic. hom.*, iii, 3. Cf. *ibid.*, V, v.

²⁹ *In Num. hom.*, xxvii; cf. Voelker, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-75.

God, we shall cross the sea with dry feet. As for the "Bitter Waters," we must not be afraid of these: "If you enter upon the path of virtue, do not refuse to approach the bitter waters." A little farther on we arrive at the desert on Sin, which name signifies bush and temptation; the bush is the vision of God, but visions are not unaccompanied by temptation:

For sometimes the angel of darkness transforms himself into an angel of light; watchful attention is therefore necessary in order to discern the different visions. Thus Josue, seeing a vision and knowing that it might be a temptation, said to the one who appeared to him: "Art thou a friend or a foe?" In the same way the soul which makes progress when she begins to discern between visions, shows that she is truly spiritual if she always knows how to discern them. That is why amongst the spiritual gifts is included that of the discernment of spirits (xi).

From Sin we reach Raphaca:

Raphaca signifies health. There are many illnesses of the soul. Avarice is a malady, and a detestable one; then there are pride, anger, boasting, fear, inconstancy, pusillanimity and all the others. When, O Lord Jesus, wilt thou cure me from all my maladies? When shall I be able to say: "O my soul, bless the Lord, who cureth all thy diseases?" When shall I also be able to establish myself in Raphaca, in health?

After this come labours, for it is in order to support these that God gives us health. Then we receive the Law of God on Sinai, "when the soul has become able to receive the divine secrets and the heavenly visions." Next comes the grave of lusts, then the open spaces of perfection and beatitude.

Notice well, O pilgrim, the law of your progress: when you have buried and mortified the concupiscences of the flesh, you will arrive at the wide open spaces of beatitude. Thence you pass on to Rathma and Pharan. Rathma signifies "consummated vision"; Pharan "visible mouth." The soul has to grow that it be no longer importuned by the flesh, and that it may have consummated visions and grasp the perfect knowledge of things, that is, the causes of the Incarnation of the Word of God, that it may understand more fully and more deeply the reasons of his dispensations (xii).

Finally, after further stages, the soul arrives at its end.

When the soul has passed through all these virtues and reached the summit of perfection, it leaves this world and goes away, as was written of Henoch: "He was found no more, for God took him." Such a man seems still to live in this world and in the flesh; and yet he is no longer to be found. Where is he no longer found? In any worldly action, in any carnal thing, in any matter of vanity. For God has taken him away from all these, and has established him in the region of virtues. The final stage is in the west, in the land of Moab, opposite the Jordan. For all this journey has no other end than to lead us to the river of God, to bring us to the flowing stream of wisdom, to bathe us in the waters of divine knowledge, so that, being purified by all these trials, we may be able to enter into the promised land (xii).

When he has finished this lengthy exposition, Origen fears that he may not have been followed by all his hearers. To bring home to them all the stages which have been passed through, he compares them to the classes which a scholar goes through: he is first of all in the alphabet class, then the class of syllables, then the class of names, and finally a calculator. This treatise and many others in Origen's homilies show us that many Christians found difficulty in grasping this symbolical exegesis. This does not surprise us, but what is very striking is the high spiritual teaching beneath the exegesis. It is indeed remarkable that the priest of Cæsarea should have been able to expound this to all the faithful, and that he should have persuaded them to follow him up to these elevated regions.

This conception of spiritual progress and of its stages has been set forth above according to Homily 27 of the *Book of Numbers*, because it is here that we best see it as a whole and in its details. But it is mentioned also very often in Origen's works.³⁰ Some historians make this a matter for criticism. For St. Paul, they say, what appears in the moral life of a Christian is mainly the rupture with the past, accomplished once for all by the new birth; for Origen, on the contrary, it is a progressive development, a gradual ascent by which we successively climb the degrees of the perfect life.³¹ This antithesis is a forced one,³² and in the measure in which

³⁰ Many other examples will be found in our article, *Les degrés de la connaissance religieuse d'après Origène*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XII, 1922, pp. 265-296.

³¹ Thus Voelker, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

³² St. Paul himself also indicates the various stages of the Christian life, for instance in *I Cor. iii. 1-2*, *Gal. iv. 19*, and on the other hand Origen presents as the first stage of the spiritual life the rupture with sin. Cf. above, p. 955.

it is exact, it is to be explained not so much by a divergence in doctrine as by a diversity in the disciples. The readers of the epistles of St. Paul were just emerging from paganism; they still retained a painful memory of the darkness in which they had so long lived, and the joy of the wonderful light which had suddenly shone upon them. Origen's hearers, on the other hand, had for the most part been Christians for a long time. They were already children of light, and they were bound to live as such, having no more darkness, but being wholly transparent and shining forth with the light of Christ.

There is another contrast, which is deeper and more instructive. If we compare the doctrine of Origen with the speculative teaching of the Gnostics, we are the better able to realise their character by the contrast between them. One of the fundamental dogmas of Gnosticism is the essential distinction between the different races of men, the hylicals, the psychicals, and the pneumatics:³³ by natural necessity a man belongs to one of these classes, and it would be in vain to endeavour to change it. In Origen, the degrees of religious knowledge are certainly far removed from each other, but there is no abyss separating them; the whole effort of the preacher is aimed at leading Christians on to the highest union with God, for all God's children can and should aspire to this.³⁴

The Christian Mysteries

While this radical opposition between the two religious conceptions is beyond question, we must allow that some features in Origen's teaching are not borrowed from the Catholic tradition, and theology will not adopt them. Clement had believed in an esoteric tradition coming from the apostles and transmitted to subsequent generations through a chain of specially favoured people.³⁵ Origen is more reserved than his master: he definitely sets aside the claim of the Gnostics to a secret tradition.³⁶ At the same time

³³ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 635, 637.

³⁴ This opposition comes out very clearly in the *Commentary on St. John*, in the texts of Heracleon and Origen's criticism of these. Cf. A. E. Brooke, *The Fragments of Heracleon*, in *Texts and Studies*, Vol. I, 4, 1891.

³⁵ Cf. Bk. III, p. 918.

³⁶ He comments thus on *I Cor.* iv, 6-8: "Let us see what is signified by 'in nobis discatis, ne supra quàm scriptum est': if someone imperfect in virtue should wish, before accomplishing what is written, to ascend as far as that which is not written, he will not even comprehend what is written. For just as

he thinks that the mysteries, and especially those which the sacred Scripture signifies by symbols, are revealed by God to chosen souls in visions, and can be communicated by these souls to others worthy to receive them.

It is certain that these mysteries were known and wholly grasped by him who was caught up to the third heaven and who, being in heaven, saw the heavenly things, the true Jerusalem, the City of God, and also Mount Sion, wherever this may be, and Hebron, and also all those towns which Scripture describes as being distributed by lot. He must not only have seen all these, but also he must have grasped in his mind the reasons of all, since he himself confesses that he heard words and traditions. But what words? "Unspeakable words," he says, "such as it is not lawful for a man to utter." You see from this that Paul grasped all things in his mind, but he was not permitted to tell all to men. To what men? Without doubt those to whom he says reproachfully: "Are you not men? Do you not walk according to man?" But he may have said all those things to those who no longer walked according to man: he told them to Timothy, to Luke and to the other disciples whom he knew to be capable of receiving ineffable secrets. And he makes a mysterious allusion to this in the recommendation he gives to Timothy: "Remember the words which thou hast heard of me, and entrust them to faithful men, who shall be capable of teaching them to others." Thus let us, who believe that these are divine and mysterious things, make ourselves by our actions and our merits worthy of these secrets, and able to understand them, so that when we shall have worthily understood them, we may be able to attain to them in the heavenly inheritance.³⁷

one cannot climb a ladder other than by ascending regularly according to one's powers, starting from the lowest steps, so also is it in the divine sciences. This has not been understood by certain heretics who appeal to Traditions and say: 'These are above that which is written; for our Saviour transmitted them secretly to his apostles, and the apostles to such or such,' and so by this mythology deceive the hearts of the simple." This fragment of Origen, published by Claude Jenkins (*Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. IX, 1908, p. 357), has been cited by D. van den Eynde (*op. cit.*, pp. 232-233). With it we must compare *In Joann.*, XIII, vi-vii, 27-39: Scripture is but an introduction to the mysteries of God, beyond there are many things which the Scripture does not contain, and even many things which the voice or the tongue of man cannot express, very few know these, but John heard them like thunder, without being able to repeat them, Paul heard them, but as unutterable words.

³⁷ In *Josue hom.*, xxiii, 4; cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XII, pp. 287-288. Cf. *De principiis*, II, xi, 5-7: concerning what we shall learn in heaven; Brady, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-258.

This text brings out a new aspect of Origenism, the Gnostic and neo-Platonist influences it displays. We find them first in the idea of a "mysterious" teaching transmitted by the apostles to a few disciples worthy to be chosen for this purpose, to Luke for instance, or Timothy; these in turn entrust these secrets to a few faithful men. Origen stops there, and does not seek to claim apostolic authority for his own speculations as derived from a mysterious tradition through this secret channel.³⁸ He thus avoids the most pernicious error; but if he does not himself appeal to this secret tradition, he admits its existence, at least in the time of the apostles and the generation which succeeded them.

The Symbolism of Scripture

This error follows from a too materialistic conception of the symbolism in the Scriptures: there are in heaven spiritual realities, of which things here below are the symbols; there is a heavenly Jerusalem, and Mount Sion, "wherever it may be," and Hebron, and all those Biblical cities whose history would be unimportant if it were not a mirror of heavenly mysteries for ourselves.³⁹ To understand this, we must recall that for Origen God alone is completely immaterial; the spiritual world, the prototype of our own, is accordingly regarded as having also its own cities and its wars, which carnal man cannot perceive, but the intuition of which may be granted to us by God. In this way the exegesis of Origen is linked up with neo-Platonist exegesis and influenced by it.⁴⁰ It supposes that these secrets can be transmitted by those who have received them to men worthy of such trust. That is clearly a dangerous mistake, for it misrepresents the truly transcendental and superhuman character of the divine revelations,⁴¹ and for the communication of

³⁸ Cf. D. van den Eynde, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

³⁹ Amongst Origen's audience, many became impatient to see him dwell on the history of the wars of Josue against Hai or other towns equally insignificant; to retain their interest he had to explain to them that these towns and these wars are symbols of spiritual realities: *In Josue hom.*, viii, 2; *hom.*, xv, 1.

⁴⁰ Thus, for Maximus of Tyre, Achilles is still living in a mysterious island off Pontus (*Conference*, XV, vii); similarly Athena, appearing to Aelius Aristides, assures him that the *Odyssey* is not a fable, but an actual reality: Ulysses is alive, and so is Telemachus (*Sacred Discourse*, II).

⁴¹ We notice that the text of St. Paul is given a wrong interpretation. "Unutterable words which it is not lawful for a man to speak" becomes ". . . which it is not lawful to say to a man"; they may be spoken to those who, by their

these secrets we are introduced to a privileged caste which Christianity does not recognise.

The True Adorers

Origen allows himself sometimes to be led on to this conception of a special form of Christianity, superior to that of the simple faithful not only by sanctity of life but also by the privilege of reserved revelations; these latter convey an intuition of divine mysteries which the mass of Christians do not know; living amongst carnal men, these spiritual people should sometimes condescend to their level:

It may happen that the true adorer, he who adores in spirit and in truth, may make use of symbolical actions in order to free gently those who are in bondage to symbols, and to enable them to pass from symbols to the truth. That is how Paul seems to have acted towards Timothy, and perhaps also at Cenchrea and Jerusalem, as is written in the *Acts of the Apostles*.⁴²

virtue, are no longer men, to Timothy or to Luke. In the *Commentary on St. John*, XIII, v. 28, Origen writes. "It was allowed to speak these words to the angels, but not to men; but here we have not only a prohibition but an impossibility: these mysteries are such that neither the voice nor the tongue of men can enunciate them, at least by the normal forms of expression" (*Ibid.*, 27).

⁴² In *Joann.*, XIII, xviii, 109-11. The same idea is developed at greater length in the first book of the same *Commentary* (I, vii, 39-43): "Just as the Law contained the shadow of the good things to come, which were to be manifested by the Law preached in truth, so the Gospel, which the common people think they understand, teaches the shadow of the mysteries of Christ. But the eternal Gospel, of which John speaks, and which may properly be called the Spiritual Gospel, presents clearly to those who understand, all that concerns the Son of God, and the mysteries revealed in his discourses, and the realities of which his actions were the symbols. . . . Peter and Paul, who at first were manifestly Jews and circumcised, subsequently received from Jesus the grace to be such in secret; they were Jews ostensibly for the salvation of the majority, and they confessed this not only by their words but also they manifested it by their actions. The same must be said of their Christianity. And just as Paul could not succour the Jews according to the flesh without circumcising Timothy when reason required this, and also shaved his head and made offerings when there was good reason for doing so, thus becoming a Jew in order to save the Jews, so also he who devotes himself to the salvation of the many cannot hope to give efficacious succour by the hidden or secret Christianity to those who are still bound up with the elements of obvious or ordinary Christianity, or make them better, or enable them to reach that which is more perfect and higher. Hence Christianity must be both spiritual and corporeal; and when we should set forth the corporeal Gospel and say that we know nothing amongst the carnal save Jesus Christ and him crucified, we must do so. But when we find people perfected by the Spirit

We see in these passages one of the dangers of such ambitions: these perfect ones, these "true adorers" regard themselves as isolated in the midst of the simple, the "Jews" or carnal ones. Adopting for themselves, not without conceit, the tactics of St. Paul, they "become Jews to the Jews, in order to gain the Jews," they "make use of symbolical actions to set free those who are in bondage to symbols." The aim is a noble one, but the method envisaged is dangerous: we get the impression on the one hand of a disdain which is rather pharisaical, and on the other of a condescension which may not be altogether sincere.⁴³

The Faith of the Simple

If, in this religious system, the position of the chosen few is a dangerous one, what is to be said of that of simple believers? In his controversy with Celsus, Origen has to answer the latter's attacks upon Christianity. In the course of his work, he defends the faith of the simple as not absolutely the best, but the best possible, in view of the weakness of those to whom it has to be proposed; possibly some chosen minds will not be satisfied with it, but these will be able to pass beyond it and ascend higher, without having thereby to abandon Christianity.⁴⁴

and bearing the fruits thereof, and in love with heavenly wisdom, we ought to communicate to them the discourse which rises from the Incarnation to that which was with God."

⁴³ It is hardly necessary to remark that the example of St. Paul does not justify such an attitude. In certain circumstances he carried out rites which had been superseded, but he more than once pointed out quite plainly that circumcision is nothing, and that Jesus Christ has delivered us from the slavery of the Law. His teaching and his own life are opposed to Origen's conception that he was outwardly a Jew and a Christian in secret.

⁴⁴ Answering the attacks of Celsus against the promises and threats set forth by the Christian religion, Origen writes: "If anyone should attempt to see in all this, not so much wickedness as superstition in the mass of those who believe in our doctrine, and criticise it as making people superstitious, we would give him the reply given by a legislator to one who asked if he had given his citizens the best laws. The answer was: 'Not absolutely the best, but the best possible.' So the Father of Christian doctrines might say: 'I have laid down the best possible laws and doctrines with a view to the amendment of the morals of the majority, threatening them with punishments which are not imaginary but penalties inflicted upon sinners, true and necessary punishments, which aim at correcting the wicked even though they may not wholly understand the will of the one who punishes them, or the way the penalties act.' All this has its utility and is according to truth, and is usefully set forth in obscure language. For the rest, it is not generally to the wicked that the Christian preaching is addressed, we are not

The teaching set forth to the simple is true; the punishments with which we threaten sinners "are not falsehoods"; they are "real punishments," and hence this elementary teaching differs from the myths which are set forth to the uninitiated in pagan religions;⁴⁵ but these truths, "which seem clear to the mass of people, may not be clear to the minds of the chosen few."⁴⁶

The Influence of Hellenism

The characteristics of Origen's thought which we have just indicated show that he was certainly a man of his time, and also illustrate the religious ideas current around him, either through his sympathy or his opposition towards them.⁴⁷

impudent towards the divinity, for we say concerning him things which are true and which seem clear to the crowd, although they may not be clear to those few minds which give themselves to philosophising on our doctrines" (*Contra Celsum*, III, lxxix). Cf. *ibid.*, I, ix; xii-xiii.

⁴⁵ This comparison between pagan and Christian initiation is given by Origen, *Contra Celsum*, I, xii, text quoted below, p. 1077.

⁴⁶ In the *Homilies on Jeremias*, Origen tries to explain how God can utter through the prophets threats which will not be accomplished, and he thus interprets *Jeremias* xx, 7, "Thou hast deceived me, O Lord, and I am deceived": "How can the prophet speak thus? Does God deceive? I do not know how to speak sufficiently prudently, for if, by the grace of God and his Word, I see something here, I need great prudence in expressing it. It was after he had been deceived that the prophet said: 'Thou hast deceived me, O Lord, and I am deceived'; it seems that the elements, the preparation, were for him a deception, and that he would not have been able to receive this elementary teaching or be prepared for piety if he had not at first been deceived, until he should at last become aware of this deception." Origen points out that in educating children, we deceive them by bogies which are necessary at first, though the children realise their unreality later on. He continues: "In respect of God, we are all children, and we have to be brought up as children; that is why God, in his mercy, deceives us, although at first we are not aware that we are being deceived; he does not wish us to be instructed by bogies when we are no longer children, but by realities. We treat differently a child, whom we frighten, and a person who is older and has ceased to be an infant" (*In Jerem. hom.*, xix, 15). After a lengthy development, Origen concludes his homily thus: "Like a child, fear the threats, in order not to suffer that which is worse than the threats, i.e. eternal punishment, the fire which cannot be extinguished, and perhaps a punishment even more terrible, which is prepared for those who have spent a long life in violating right reason." This final exhortation sufficiently indicates what are the "bogies" of which Origen speaks; they are, not eternal punishments, but punishments here below. On this question of the faith of the simple, and the truth which Origen attributes to it, cf. *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XII, pp. 266 *et seq.*

⁴⁷ On the relations between Origen and Plotinus, we have Porphyry's statement in his *Life of Plotinus*, iii and xiv: "Herennius, Origen and Plotinus had agreed

We have already mentioned Porphyry's statement concerning Origen: ⁴⁸ "In his conduct he lived as a Christian, but in his belief concerning the divinity he was a Greek, and transported the art of the Greeks to foreign fables." This judgment by a bitter opponent should be received only with reserve; our own study of the religious teaching of Origen enables us to apply the necessary modifications.

It is beyond question that Origen desired above all to be a Christian and to form other Christians; it is equally certain that he set out to give to Christianity an interpretation more profound than that which was current amongst the mass of the faithful. In this effort he utilised, when he thought it possible, the religious conceptions and especially the theological methods which he found in the Hellenism of his time.

Thus, when he describes the sphere of action of the three divine Persons, ⁴⁹ he seems to be influenced by the principle familiar to the neo-Platonists: the action of the supreme causes is more generic, and underlies the more particular activity of secondary causes. ⁵⁰ It is also from Hellenism that he derives his belief

together to keep secret the doctrines of Ammonius, which their master had thoroughly explained to them in his lectures. Plotinus kept his promise; he conversed with some who went to him, but he concealed from all the doctrines he had received from Ammonius. Herennius was the first to break the agreement, and Origen followed him. He wrote only the *Treatise on Demons*, and in the reign of Gallienus his treatise *That the King alone is a Poet.*" Bréhier (*op. cit.*, p. 4, n. 1) attributes these two lost treatises to Origen, and that is certainly the natural sense of the text, but if the second was composed in the reign of Gallienus it could not have been Origen's work, for he died at the age of 69 in 254 or 255, i.e. before the reign of Gallienus (260). Cf. xiv: "One day, Origen came to Plotinus's class; he (the latter) blushed and wished to stand up. Asked by Origen to speak, he replied that one no longer desired to do so when one was certain to be addressing people who knew what one was going to say; he continued the discussion for a little while and then arose." Now Plotinus was born in 203; he went to Rome in the reign of Philip at the age of 40 after Gordian's death, passing through Antioch on the way. The meeting in question may have taken place at Antioch; we do not know of a visit of Origen to Rome after 243. The *Life of Plotinus* was written by Porphyry in 298, 28 years after the death of Plotinus. Porphyry was then at least 68 years old; he had lived five years with Plotinus, from 263. Origen was then dead; Porphyry therefore could not have witnessed the meeting he mentions. It is widely thought that the Origen mentioned here was a pagan philosopher and not the master of the Catechetical School. But this distinction itself gives rise to many difficulties.

⁴⁸ Cf. *supra*, p. 933.

⁴⁹ *De principiis*. I, iii, 3; cf. *supra*, p. 940, n. 39.

⁵⁰ Proclus, *Element. Theol.*, 71-72, ed. Dodds, Oxford, 1933, p. 68; cf. n., p. 238.

in the pre-existence of souls,⁵¹ the conception of the heavenly beings as spherical bodies,⁵² and of the souls of the dead as luminous bodies.⁵³ As for magic, Origen certainly opposed it throughout, but he regarded it as a serious science, known only by a small number of men.⁵⁴

The Allegorical Method

All these things bear witness to the contact between Origen's thought and the Hellenism of his time. But more important than these coincidences, which affect only secondary points in religious doctrine, there remains Origen's adoption of certain mental attitudes and forms of speculation, which came from neo-Platonism and left their impress on his theological system. We must mention especially here the relation he establishes between the sensible and the intelligible worlds, the former being the symbol and the latter the reality signified by the symbol. Origen's exegesis is dominated by this conception, as had been that of Philo:

If there are secret relations between the visible and the invisible, earth and heaven, the flesh and the soul, the body and the spirit, and if the world arises from the union of these, there exists also in Scripture a visible element and an invisible one. It has a body—the letter which is seen by everyone; a soul—the hidden meaning which it encloses; and a spirit—the heavenly things it figures and represents.⁵⁵

This distinction between the literal and the spiritual sense is traditional in the Church, and Origen rightly emphasises in his

⁵¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 938.

⁵² *De oratione*, xxxi, 3. On this theory of spherical bodies in Hellenism, cf. the note in the edition of Koetschau, p. 397; on its place in Origenism, cf. Huet, *Origeniana*, II, ii, 9.

⁵³ *Contra Celsum*, II, lx. Cf. Hippolytus, *Philos.*, I, xix, 10. On the astral bodies of souls, cf. *De principiis*, II, ii.

⁵⁴ *Contra Celsum*, I, xxiv. He allows that by his magic Apollonius of Tyana deceived many wise men, showing that such enchantments have their effect not only on the simple but also on philosophers: cf. *ibid.*, II, xli. On this whole question, cf. Bardy, *Origène et la Magie*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 126-142.

⁵⁵ *In Levit. hom.*, v, 1. The Greek text of this passage has been preserved in *Philocalia*, ch. xxx. Origen distinguishes three principles in man: the body, the soul and the spirit, and consequently there are three senses in Scripture: cf. *De princ.*, III, iv, 1; *ibid.*, IV, iv, 11; *In Levit. hom.*, v, 5. Underlying this theory we find the comparison between Scripture and a living being. Similarly Philo (*De vita contemplativa*, lxxviii), who distinguishes only between soul and body, finds two senses in Scripture, one being the soul and the other the body.

treatise *De principiis* the strength of this tradition.⁵⁶ But what is peculiar to himself is the interpretation he gives to these two senses⁵⁷ and of the relation between them: they are related as the sensible to the intelligible, as the visible to the invisible, and as the body to the spirit. This relation is based on a natural connection (συγγένεια) which unites together these two worlds. The Old Testament is the figure of the New, but also a symbol of the eternal realities. This applies to Jerusalem, Mount Sion, Hebron and the other Biblical cities,⁵⁸ and also to the whole history of Christ:

That which has been written concerning the events in the history of Jesus must not be thought to have no other truth than that of the letter and the historic fact, for those who study the Scriptures with more understanding show that each of these facts is itself a symbol.⁵⁹

Briefly, just as the Law was but a preparation for the Gospel, so also the latter is itself the symbol of the eternal Gospel.⁶⁰ But these symbols are intelligible only to Spiritual Christians;⁶¹ ordinary folk think they understand the Gospel, but they do not grasp its ultimate significance.

This interpretation of the spiritual sense was not the only one

⁵⁶ "Another point of ecclesiastical teaching is that the Holy Spirit, the author of the Scriptures, gives to them, besides the sense which is on the surface, another one which escapes the majority of men. The sacred narratives are types and figures of divine mysteries. The whole Church agrees in saying that the Law is spiritual, but the spiritual sense of the Law is known only by those to whom the Holy Spirit has deigned to grant wisdom and knowledge" (*De princ.*, I, *pref.*, 8).

⁵⁷ The three senses are more usually reduced to two in Origen.

⁵⁸ Cf. *supra*, p. 962.

⁵⁹ *Contra Celsum*, II, lxix.

⁶⁰ *In Joann.*, I, vii, 39, quoted above, p. 964, n. 42.

⁶¹ The spiritual man possesses a "divine sensibility," or spiritual senses of vision, hearing, etc., which enable him to perceive suprasensible realities: *Contra Celsum*, I, xlviii; cf. Gregory, in his *Discourse*, 177: "That which God set forth through others by means of enigmas, he made to be understood by Origen"; 178: "If he teaches all this, it is, I think, by the communication of the divine Spirit, for those who prophesy and those who understand the prophets have need of the same power, and no one can understand a prophet unless the same Spirit who has prophesied gives him the understanding of the discourse." This theory of the inspiration of the exegete is an exaggeration of Gregory's. Origen himself is more reserved; cf. Zoellig, *op. cit.*, p. 95, quoting *Epist. ad Greg.*, iii; *In Mt.*, xv, 27. Yet it is easy to understand the exaggeration: these spiritual realities, of which sensible realities are the symbols, are not taught by the official tradition, nor by a secret tradition; they are grasped only by an intuition which is a gift of God.

set forth by Origen.⁶² His fight against the literalism of the Marcionites, even more than against that of the Jews,⁶³ made him more impatient against the slavery of the letter. His impatience was justified, and his opposition was to a certain extent beneficial.⁶⁴ But at the same time it must be allowed that by its exaggeration it provoked the literalist reaction of the School of Antioch.⁶⁵

For these exaggerations, Hellenism was in great part responsible, and Porphyry was not far wrong when he wrote: "It was from Cheremon and Cornutus that Origen learnt the allegorical method of the Greek mysteries, which he proceeded to apply to the Jewish Scriptures."⁶⁶

The Divine Hierarchy

To Hellenic influences must also be attributed the metaphysical scheme of the hierarchy of spiritual beings and even of the divine Persons, which so deeply disfigures Origen's theology.⁶⁷

The three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are regarded by him

⁶² If we proceed from the general principle to its applications, we find that the mysteries which Origen perceives behind the letter of the Scriptures are not philosophical speculations but the religious truths which God has revealed to Christians.

⁶³ On Origen's criticism of Jewish exegesis, cf. Harnack, *Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag*, Vol. I, pp. 22-30; on the Marcionites, *ibid.*, pp. 30-39; cf. Vol. II, pp. 10-34. Notice in particular a passage of Apelles, quoted by Origen, *In Gen. hom.*, ii, 2, concerning the construction of Noe's Ark: the Ark could not hold two pairs of animals of impure species and seven of pure species; even four elephants could not have found room in the Ark. "Apelles concludes: 'Accordingly, that is only a lying myth, and not divine Scripture.'" Origen replies first that, according to Hebrew tradition, all the figures given for the dimensions of the Ark must be raised to their cubes, and then he proceeds to the spiritual sense: Noe is Christ, and the Ark is the Church.

⁶⁴ Cf. St. Augustine, *Conf.*, VI, iv, 6: "I loved to hear Ambrose say, as he often did in his discourses to the people, 'The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life'; and in all the passages in which the teaching according to the letter seemed pernicious, he lifted the mystic veil, and opened the spiritual sense." We sometimes find even in St. Jerome this too low view of the historical sense, for which Origen is justly criticised: *Epist. ad Nepot.*, lii, 2.

⁶⁵ This reaction in turn had its own exaggerations. In St. John Chrysostom it produced excellent results, but we cannot forget Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Nestorians. Newman maintained, possibly with some exaggeration, that the allegorism of Alexandria was the Catholic tradition, while the Antiochene literalism was the source of heresies (*Development of Christian Doctrine*, London, 1894, pp. 285 and 343).

⁶⁶ Text quoted above, p. 933. On Hellenic allegorism, cf. above, p. 968.

⁶⁷ Cf. above, p. 940.

as a hierarchy of beings, with the Father at the head, and the Son and Holy Spirit functioning as intermediaries between him and creatures. This conception is primarily religious, inspired by the idea of the progressive ascent of the soul. It receives a further emphasis when combined with the idea of transcendence. This latter idea took in Origen a mathematical form similar to that which it had in Plotinus.⁶⁸ It is not to be attributed to the influence of Ammonius Saccas,⁶⁹ but partly to that of Philo, and above all to the prevalence of ideas which at that time had a very wide appeal.

§ 4. THE APOLOGIST

The Contra Celsum

"Origen lived as a Christian, but thought as a Greek." That statement by Porphyry may seem to be justified in part by the preceding remarks, yet the religious and literary activities of Origen refute it. He certainly was profoundly influenced by Hellenism, and yet he was absolutely intransigent so far as the religious speculations of the Greeks were concerned. These two characteristics, irreconcilable in appearance and yet deeply rooted in Origen's work, are particularly clear in his apologetics, as set forth in his eight books *Against Celsus*. Written in the last years of his life, in 248, these throw a flood of light upon his whole career.¹

⁶⁸ "The Father is absolute unity; the Son is multiple, at least virtually. God, then, is in every way a being which is one and simple; but Our Saviour, because of the multiplicity of beings, because God has made him the propitiation and principle of the whole creation, becomes multiple, and even perhaps becomes all these things, inasmuch as the whole creation capable of deliverance aspires towards him. It is for this he becomes the light of men, when men, darkened by evil, have need of the light which shineth in the darkness and the darkness has not suffocated them; he would not have been the light of men if men had not been in darkness" (*In Joann.*, I, xx, 119). Huet (Migne, P.G., Vol. XIV, 57) in a note defends Origen here against Petavius; it is certain that the redemption and even the creation involve in the Son relations which are due to his free will: *In Joann.*, fr., I, p. 485, 5; and I, xix, 118. But even before the creation, or independently of it, Origen finds in the word a plurality which he does not recognise in the Father. Cf. Redepenning, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 297, Denis, *op. cit.*, p. 102, and texts quoted above, p. 940. We find a similar conception in Clement, *Stromata*, IV, xxv, 156, and already in Philo, *De somniis*, I, lxii: "The logos is the place of the ideas."

⁶⁹ As is done by Zeller (*Philos. der Griechen*, Vol. V, p. 459, n. 3).

¹ On the polemics between Celsus and Origen, cf.: G. Bardy, *Le Contra Celsum d'Origène*, in *Revue pratique d'Apologétique*, Vol. XXVIII, 1919, pp. 751-761; Vol. XXIX, pp. 39-54 and 92-98; Anna Miura-Stange, *Celsus und Origenes*, Giessen, 1926; P. de Labriolle, *La Réaction païenne*, pp. 111-169.

The *True Discourse* of Celsus had been written seventy years previously. Origen had not read it, and it had made little impression on the Christians of Egypt and Palestine. It would probably have remained in oblivion if Ambrose had not read it by chance, and realised that it was a dangerous work which might disturb many souls by its attacks. He sent the work to Origen, begging him earnestly to refute it. The aged master could not refuse his friend anything; he took up the task, though at first unwillingly: was not silence like that which Jesus kept in face of his calumniators the only reply which such a libel deserved? Moreover, the works of Christ and the life lived by his disciples are a sufficient defence:

Accordingly, I affirm that the apologia which you ask me to write can only weaken this apologia in action, this power of Jesus evident to every man who is not insensible. Nevertheless, in order not to seem to refuse your request, I have tried my best to reply to each of Celsus's attacks, although in my opinion no believer could be shaken by his statements.²

The discussion then begins. Origen sets forth all the arguments of Celsus, usually in the very words in which they were pronounced, and then he refutes them.³ This method made it necessary for the apologist to follow the meandering scheme of his opponent and his slow steps, but at any rate it had the great advantage of setting forth the attack itself in all sincerity as well as the defence.⁴

Celsus's Attack

We cannot follow out this controversy in all its details. But it is interesting to notice the pagan and Christian theses as they then confronted each other in the works of these vigorous writers.

² *Contra Celsum*, pref., 3.

³ He had first conceived a more ambitious plan: the detailed discussion was to have been followed by a comprehensive demonstration. But for lack of time he abandoned this (cf. *ibid.*, 6).

⁴ The exposition of Celsus's arguments by Origen is sufficiently faithful to enable one to reconstruct, fragment by fragment, the *True Discourse* of the former. Cf. *Scriptores Græci qui Christianam impugnauerunt religionem*, I. Κελσον ἀληθὲς λόγος. The editor, K. J. Neumann, writes: "The piecing together of the fragments and the reconstitution of Celsus's work show that hardly a tenth part of it has been lost; and that what we still possess is for the most part in its original text" (*Real-Encycl. für protest. Theol.*, Vol. III, p. 773).

Celsus was regarded by Origen as an Epicurean. Some critics think he was rather a Platonist; it would seem to be more correct to regard him as an eclectic with an acute mind, well acquainted with the literature and philosophy of his time, but not adhering to any particular school. In addition, he was a statesman rather than a man of letters, a zealous official of the Roman Empire and jealous of the observance of traditions and laws.

If we compare him with his predecessors, he is greatly superior to them. The opponents whom Minucius Felix and Tertullian had to face still believed that Christians practised infanticide and incest. Celsus is not so credulous: when attacking his adversaries he despises these vague rumours, and seeks for more precise accusations with greater support. He claims to have read not only the books of the two Testaments, but also the writings of Christians; he has even studied the Gnostic sects, and very unfairly makes use of the information thus received to impute to the Church as a whole the follies and vices of these sectaries. He makes a great parade of his information, and he affirms in a boastful manner that he knows all about Christianity: πάντα γὰρ οἶδα (I, xii). Origen rightly rebukes his bragging:

If he had read the prophets, whose books are admitted to be enigmatical and obscure; if he had gone through the evangelical parables, the law, the history of the Jews and the writings of the Apostles and, having read them without prejudice, had tried to penetrate their meaning, he would not say with such assurance: "I know all." We ourselves, who have studied all these things closely, would not dare to say "I know all," for we love the truth.

Starting out with such assurance, Celsus first criticises the Old Testament, and repeats the current accusations against the Jews: they are a vagabond people expelled from Egypt and deceived by Moses (III, v; IV, xxxi). Moses himself was a plagiarist who took from the Egyptians what there is of good in him (I, xxi). The sacred books, and especially *Genesis*, are a tissue of gross legends, unworthy to be regarded as divine or to be used in the religious formation of a people. True, Jews and Christians explain away the reprehensible parts of these old stories by means of allegory, but that is only an artifice which proves their embarrassment (IV, xlix).

Jesus is the main object of his sarcasm and his attacks. Gathering

together the vilest of the Jewish calumnies, Celsus represents Jesus as being born of an adulterous union between Mary and a soldier named Panther (I, xxxii). Expelled with his mother, Jesus had to go to Egypt to gain a livelihood; there he learnt the magical arts which he later on utilised in order to deceive people. His aspect was common, his wisdom wholly borrowed from Plato, and his courage greatly inferior to that of Heracles or Epictetus.

How can we regard as a god this man who performed nothing he had promised? When we convicted and judged him and condemned him to punishment, he hid himself, took flight, and was then captured in a shameful manner: he was delivered up by those he called his disciples. If he was God, he ought not to have fled, nor to have been dragged along by ropes, and still less abandoned and given up by those who lived with him, called him their master, and regarded him as their Saviour, the Son of the most high God, and an angel. . . . If things came to pass as he willed, if he was struck down in obeying his Father, obviously nothing could have been hard or painful to him, since he was God and willed all these things. Why then does he lament, why does he groan, why does he seek to avoid the death he fears, saying "O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"? ⁵

The Resurrection was a fable, originating in the imagination of a woman and a few fanatics:

Do you hold that the legends [of Orpheus and Heracles] are myths, and that the catastrophe of your own drama is an intelligible and likely one, with the cry on the Cross at the expiry, and the earthquake and the darkness? And that he who when alive had not been able to defend himself, rose again after his death, and displayed the wounds of his torture, and his pierced hands? Who was it who believed all that? A fanatical woman, according to you, and perhaps some magician of the same band, who either dreamt it or was hallucinated by his desires, as happens to so many others, or rather he wished to astonish others by this prodigy, and provide a basis for new deceptions by this lie.⁶

Christians are treated with the same brutal disdain: they are charlatans; like diviners and magicians, they are incapable of asking or giving a reason for their belief; they are always repeating: "Do not seek out, but believe," "Thy faith will save thee"; or again, "Wisdom is an evil; foolishness is a good thing."⁷ They

⁵ *Contra Celsum*, II, ix and xxxiii-xxiv.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, lv.

⁷ *Contra Celsum*, I, ix.

avoid intelligent men, and seek out the ignorant, slaves, and children:

We see them going into private houses, those of spinners of wool, shoemakers, fullers, and in general those of the most ignorant and gross. In presence of the aged and prudent owners of houses they say not a word. But when they find some child or woman as ignorant as themselves, they tell them wonderful things: that one should not listen to father or master, but believe themselves; that their fathers are stupid fools, incapable of understanding or doing splendid things but absorbed by trifles; they alone know how one ought to live; if the children listen to them, it will be very fortunate for them and their house. And if while they are thus talking they perceive the tutor or the father himself coming, the more timid ones withdraw; the bolder urge the children to cast off the yoke, murmuring that they neither wish nor are able to say anything good in presence of the father or masters, corrupt persons whose brutality they fear; let the children leave their fathers and the teachers, and come with the women and their playmates to the gynæceum, or the workshop of the shoemaker or the fuller, and there learn the last word about perfection. And people believe them.⁸

In other mysteries, it is proclaimed: "Only those may approach who have pure hands and a right speech," or again, "Only those may draw near who are without stain, whose soul is not conscious of any fault, whose life has been good and upright." That is what is proclaimed by those who promise purification from faults. But whom do Christians call? Anyone who is a sinner, whosoever is without intelligence, or is weak in mind; in other words, whosoever is unfortunate will be received into the Kingdom of God. When you say: "Whosoever is a sinner," what do you mean thereby, if not the unjust man, the robber, the burglar, the poisoner, the violator of temples and tombs? . . . Truly we have here the proclamation of a robber-chief recruiting his gang.⁹

At the close of these vehement attacks in which Celsus cruelly wounds Christians on subjects on which they would feel deeply, we find his assurance failing, and his voice growing more gentle. From those whom he has thus despised and hated, he now demands support:

Uphold the emperor with all your might; collaborate with him for the defence of the right; fight for him, combat for him if circumstances call for it; assist him in the command of his armies; apply yourselves to

⁸ *Ibid.*, III, lv.

⁹ *Contra Celsum*, III, lix-lxi.

the governing of the State if this is necessary in order to defend the laws and piety.¹⁰

Thus Celsus's polemics, so supercilious and peremptory, end in timid conclusions: the implacable opponent of the Christians finally summons them to the support of the State. Origen, on the other hand, restrained and prudent in controversy, defends his religion with thorough-going intransigence. Celsus finds his support in his human culture, in the philosophers and poets whose sentiments he echoes, and whose authority in his view ought to crush his ignorant opponents. But his religion is inconsistent, and is maintained only by compromises; he realises this, and gives proof of it more than once. Origen on the other hand finds in Christianity as yet only an imperfect exegetical science and a philosophy which is being elaborated, but at the same time he recognises in it with full assurance the certitude and fecundity of divine truth.¹¹

Origen's Reply

Of all the objections by Celsus, none affected Origen more than the criticism of the faith of the simple. Origen answered by asserting firmly that this simple faith constitutes a kind of knowledge assured by the word of God and shown to be fruitful by the Christian life:

Let the question be put to the multitude of believers purified by the faith from the mire of the vices in which they were previously floundering, which of the two systems is to be preferred: the correction of morals by believing without question in the reward which awaits virtue and the punishment which threatens the guilty, or else the rejection of simple faith, and the postponement of the reform of morals until the conclusion of the rational discussion. It is obvious that with very few exceptions, these people would all fail to reach even that degree of rectitude of conduct assured by simple faith, but would persevere instead in a very evil life. This is by no means to be despised as a proof

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, VIII, lxxiii-lxxv.

¹¹ Cf. Miura-Strange, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-166. Harnack (*Mission und Ausbreitung*, p. 520) greatly stresses this conclusion of Celsus, but he exaggerates its importance when he says: "The *True Discourse* of Celsus is, in the last analysis, a political tract, and a scarcely veiled peace offer." If such had really been Celsus's intention, he would not have so grossly insulted those whom he merely wished to reconcile to the Empire.

of the divine origin of our doctrine concerning the Saviour, seeing that it is really indispensable to the well-being of mankind.¹²

But Origen does not confine himself to this first reply: he goes on to show that Christianity itself offers to the select few a special knowledge, more elevated and rarer than the faith of the simple: "Even according to our own doctrine, it is much better to adhere to doctrines with reason and wisdom than by simple faith; if the Word wished in certain cases for simple faith, it was in order not to leave mankind wholly without assistance."¹³ The faith of the simple is indeed excellent knowledge in its own way, but it is elementary. It is the milk for babes; God in his mercy gives it to those who are too weak to ascend higher to "know God in the wisdom of God."¹⁴

In these answers we recognise Origen's own intellectual needs: the faith of the simple is not enough for him. What the mass of people believe in this way "seems clear, but it is not clear to those few chosen souls who endeavour to philosophise on our doctrine." Even so, though Origen does not wish to stop at this elementary knowledge, he recognises not only its utility, but also its truth, and that is the essential point.¹⁵

Prophecy

In these preliminary discussions, Origen has set forth his own thought without concealing its delicate points. In the argumentation which fills the eight books we find the same sincerity, together

¹² *Contra Celsum*, I, ix. Cf. Bardy, in *Revue pratique d'apologétique*, Vol. XXIX, 1919, p. 40.

¹³ *Contra Celsum*, I, xiii.

¹⁴ Hence we are not surprised to find Origen in another passage of the *Contra Celsum* defending this faith of the simple as, not absolutely the best, but the best possible, considering the weakness of those to whom it has to be set forth. The passage has been quoted above, pp. 965-966.

¹⁵ That is how the Gnostics differ from true Christians: "Those who are outside the Church do not teach the same thing at the beginning and at the end of their teaching. For first of all they turn people away from idolatry and conduct them to the Demiurge; then they change, and reject the Old Testament, thus contradicting their elementary teaching. But in the masters who belong to the Church, the end is in conformity with the principles laid down at first" (*In Proverb.*, ii, 16). In the passage quoted above, pp. 965-966, we notice the insistence with which Origen affirms this essential character of Christian teaching: the punishments it threatens "are not falsehoods"; these punishments are "true"; the elementary teaching given concerning God contains "only true things."

with a freer treatment; the apologist sets forth his proofs in all their force. "Christianity has a demonstration which is proper to it, and which is more divine than the dialectics of the Greeks. This divine demonstration is called by the apostle 'the manifestation of the Spirit and of power'" (I, ii). In these two Origen sees the proofs from prophecy and miracle, which are for him the two main arguments for Christianity.

The argument from prophecy is the favourite one put forward by Christians, and Origen vigorously criticises Celsus for passing it by instead of discussing it properly. Origen reminds him that the virginal conception of Christ was foretold, as well as his birth at Bethlehem, his passion, his twofold coming, his resurrection, and the conversions which this would bring about. Celsus says that all this might be said of a thousand others: let him try to mention one.¹⁶

Nevertheless, however explicit the prophecies may have been, and however impatiently the Jews awaited their fulfilment, the reality surpassed the anticipatory hopes. Celsus tries in vain to relegate Jesus to the crowd of Messianic pretenders. Which of these ever claimed to be the Son of God? And has Celsus ever met any Jew who expected a really divine Messiah?¹⁷

Christ and the Gospel

Jesus Christ certainly put forth these claims, and he upheld them by his whole life and his passion. Here, at this central point in his argument, Origen has to deal with a preliminary question raised by Celsus: are the Gospels credible? Origen replies, as Pascal will reply many centuries later: "The many sufferings undergone by the apostles are the best proof of the sincerity of their conviction."¹⁸ He presses Celsus more closely: "You think that Herodotus and Pindar cannot have lied; do you treat as myths and fables these events narrated by those who because of them were reduced to a miserable life and a violent death?"¹⁹

Elsewhere he has recourse to an equally effective argument: the

¹⁶ *Contra Celsum*, II, xxviii; II, viii; III, li; I, xxxiv; I, li, etc.

¹⁷ *Contra Celsum*, I, xlix, lvii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, II, x.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, III, xxvii. Later on he protests because all the stories in Plutarch are taken seriously, while credence is refused to men who were devoted to God until death itself (V, 57).

sincerity of the evangelists is apparent in what they tell us about themselves, their weaknesses, their abandonment of Christ, and the denial by Peter (II, xv); it appears above all in the portrait they give of Jesus. Celsus is scandalised at the prayer of Christ in the Garden: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me." But ought he not at least to see in this narrative an evident proof of the sincerity of the narrator? He makes fun of the taunts of the soldiers, the purple mantle, the crown of thorns, and the reed: "Where, then, O Celsus, have you gathered all this information, if not in the Gospel? And you think that all this is very laughable. Those who wrote it doubtless foresaw that you and your like would laugh at it, but also that others would find therein the strength to ignore your laughter."²⁰

As for the scandal which Celsus affects in regard to Jesus, Origen reminds him that the promises of Christ have been fulfilled, his benefits have been showered over the whole world, the Gospel has been preached everywhere, and martyrs suffer everywhere for his sake. Then he concludes:

I do not know what greater or more manifest signs Celsus could claim; unless it be that, misunderstanding the Incarnation of the Word Jesus, he will not suffer him to have anything human, or permit him to give to mankind a noble model of patience. By his sufferings Jesus has not in any way shaken our faith in himself. He has on the contrary confirmed it, at least in those who are well disposed and who are ready to learn from him that the true and happy life is not the present one here below, but belongs, as he himself says, to the future world.²¹

The Resurrection of Jesus

Of all the facts in the life of Jesus, the one with the greatest apologetic import is his Resurrection, and this is the chief subject of the objections of Celsus and of Origen's replies. The pagan, ever seeking for parallels, recalls the adventures of Orpheus, Protesilas, Heracles, and Theseus. Origen, without discussing all these myths, shows that these heroes might have withdrawn from the sight of men and then reappeared. Jesus, on the other hand, was

²⁰ *Contra Celsum*, II, xxv, xxvi, xxxiv; III, xxxix.

²¹ *Ibid.*, II, xlii. One should also read again the passage in VII, liv, in which Origen contrasts the celebrated speeches of the heroes of Hellenism, Anaxarchos or Epictetus, with the silence of Christ in his passion.

publicly crucified, and died in the sight of all; hence if he afterwards reappeared alive, his Resurrection is undeniable. Now this real life of the risen Saviour is attested by the apostles who witnessed it, and they maintained their testimony until death. "If they invented this story of the Resurrection, how comes it that they preached it afterwards with such force that not only did they lead others to despise death, but first despised it themselves?"²²

Celsus would reduce the appearances of the risen Jesus to mere hallucinations or to dreams. How can one explain in this way the appearance to St. Thomas, or the one to the disciples on the road to Emmaus? It is objected: why did not the risen Christ manifest himself to everybody? The answer is that all were not worthy to see him, nor able to bear the sight of him.²³

Moreover, the Resurrection is proved also by prophecies and miracles, and above all by the fruits of salvation it has brought to mankind. For Celsus, the risen Christ is only a phantom. "But how can a phantom which is a transient deception afterwards have such results, convert so many souls, and persuade them to do all in order to please the God who will judge them? How can a phantom expel demons, and work great miracles, not fixing itself in one particular place, like the gods in human form, but operating in the whole world, gathering together and drawing to himself by his divinity all those who are disposed to lead an upright life?"²⁴

We recognise here one of the characteristic features in Origen's apologetics: in order to make men understand divine things, he does not isolate them, but presents them in the concrete whole which supports them and clarifies them. He does not separate Christ's Resurrection either from his life which preceded it, or from the transformation of the apostles which followed it, or from the conversion of the pagans which is its fruit.²⁵

²² *Ibid.*, II, lvi; I, xxxi.

²³ *Contra Celsum*, II, lxi, lxii, lxvii.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, VII, xxxv.

²⁵ We find the same method in this argument in favour of the virginal conception: "Is it likely that he who has done so much for the whole human race, who has brought, as much as he could, all men, Greek and barbarians, to fear the divine judgments, to abstain from vices, and to seek to please the Creator of the universe in all things—is it likely that he should not have had a miraculous birth, but instead one the most culpable and most shameful?" (*Contra Celsum*, I, xxxii). Celsus, repeating a Jewish calumny, had affirmed that Jesus had been born of an adulterous union.

The Conversion of the World

This conversion of the world is the main argument set forth by Origen, and he constantly returns to it. It is said that Jesus was not God's messenger. How then has he converted the world, and brought about so salutary and so profound a change? Let us suppose that, to show the effectiveness of his own action, someone should bring forward a hundred men whom he had brought back to a better life. Who would dare to say that he had done this without God's help? Look now upon the work of Christ, and consider whence he drew his disciples, and what he has made of them: it will be realised that he undertook and accomplished a work which was more than human. Celsus sneers at Jesus's humble birth and his position as a working man: but is not all this a further proof of the divine support? Plato records that one day a certain Seriphian pointed out to Themistocles that the latter owed his glory, not to his personal merit, but to his country. "True," replied Themistocles, "if I were of Seriphos I would be unknown; but if you were of Athens, you would not be a Themistocles." Origen continues: "To continue the parallel, our Jesus was not even a Seriphian, that is, he did not belong even to the smallest and most insignificant island; but though he was still humbler than the people of Seriphos, he has been able to shake the whole world, not only more than Themistocles the Athenian but more than Pythagoras, more than Plato, more than all the wise men or kings or military commanders of the earth." ²⁶

Celsus criticises the way in which Jesus chose his disciples. But has he not really thus proved Jesus's power, which transformed them from sinners into saints? Among the Greeks, at most one can mention Phædo and Polemon as having been rescued by philosophy from disorder. But the action of Jesus on the other hand was not confined to his twelve apostles; it has reached innumerable disciples, who are all able to repeat: "We ourselves were some time unwise, incredulous, erring, slaves to divers desires and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he made us what we are by the laver of regeneration,

²⁶ *Contra Celsum*, I, xxvi-xxix.

and renovation of the Holy Ghost whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly." ²⁷

In these passages—and we could quote many other similar ones ²⁸—Origen's argument is always based upon the expansion of Christianity and the conversion of souls: these two traits are not separate from each other but constitute one unique fact and manifest the action of God in the world.

Christians and the State

This action is made still more evident in the persecutions which Christianity has constantly had to encounter. The repressive measures taken in times past against Socrates and Pythagoras were violent but of short duration; after the crisis the schools of these philosophers were able to develop freely. But Christians, on the contrary, have been persecuted by the Roman Senate, by the emperors, the army, the populace, even by the relatives of the faithful themselves, and only by the divine power has Christianity been able to surmount so many obstacles and vanquish the whole world which had been aroused against it. ²⁹

²⁷ *Ibid.*, I, lxiv; III, lxxvii, lxxviii; VI, ii; II, lxxix. Origen also delights to contrast the fruitful action of Christ with that of the heroes of mythology whom Celsus sets up against him: "Let him tell me, then, what great things Asclepius, Dionysus or Heracles have done, what men they have converted, whose conduct or doctrine they have changed." And elsewhere: "If the Pythian Apollo was a god, he should have utilised his oracles for the conversion, salvation and moral amendment of mankind" (III, xlii; VII, vi).

²⁸ For instance, III, xxvii, in which Origen invites his opponent to compare the pagan cities with the Christian churches established therein: "The churches formed by Christ, if compared to the assemblies of the cities in which they live, appear as lighted torches in the world. For who will not confess that the least good members of the Church are often better than many of those seen in the civil assemblies? Thus the Church of God which is at Athens is gentle and constant, doing its best to please the supreme God; while the assembly of Athens is tumultuous, and cannot in any way be compared with the Church." After comparing in the same way the churches of Corinth and Alexandria with these cities, he adds: "If we compare the senate of the Church of God to the senate of each city, it will be found that some of the senators of the Church would be worthy senators of a divine city, if there were such a city of God in the world, while the civil senators in no way deserve by their morals the eminent place they occupy among their fellow citizens. Compare, in the same way, the head of each church to the heads of cities, and you will find that in the churches of God, even those who are in the lowest rank among the senators and heads, and who by comparison seem to be negligent, are yet superior to all the civil magistrates, if we put their respective virtues side by side."

²⁹ *Contra Celsum*, I, iii. •

The opposition of Christians towards the State can be justified without difficulty. We are urged to remain faithful to the traditional and national cults. But are the philosophers forbidden to free themselves from the superstitions in which they were brought up? Why then try to prevent us contemning the gods of paganism, in order to turn all our homage towards the Creator of the universe? For the rest, is it not recognised that human laws deserve less respect than the natural law, which is the very law of God? And is it not above all in religion that the law of God should be respected by us?³⁰

Christians are criticised as not serving the State. But they pray for it, as the apostle told them they ought to do. If military service is not required from the priests of idols, why require it of Christians? They keep away from magistracies, but even within the Church they decline as far as possible the charges which it is sought to place upon them.³¹

Let the Empire be converted to Christianity, and God will watch over it. Meanwhile, Christians devote themselves to doing good to all, to those who are within by making them better, and to those who are without by drawing them to doctrine and to works of piety. In other words they do their best to penetrate as many men as possible with the Word of God, the divine law, in order to unite them to the supreme God through his Son and his Word.³²

These considerations, with which Origen closes his work, remind us of the opposition between the two cities. The Christian conquest was not yet finished; paganism, which still reigned in the Empire, would very soon wage a cruel war against the Church, and Origen was to be one of its victims. Yet the hopes of the apologist were not vain: seventy years later Rome itself would be conquered.

Origen's Last Years and Death

The intense activity displayed by Origen at Cæsarea did not entirely absorb him, for he also carried on a considerable correspondence. Eusebius made a collection of his letters, and possessed

³⁰ *Ibid.*, V, xxxv-xxxvii.

³¹ *Ibid.*, VIII, lxxiii.

³² *Ibid.*, VIII, lxxix *et seq.*

more than a hundred of them. He mentions in particular letters addressed to the Emperor Philip, to his wife Severa, and others, "to Fabian, Bishop of Rome, and to many other heads of churches, concerning his orthodoxy."³³

About 240 Origen made another journey to Athens, and stayed there some time.³⁴ Returning from there, he stopped at Nicomedia, to see his faithful friend Ambrose.³⁵ About 244 he was called to Bostra to Bishop Beryllus, and succeeded in winning him back from Monarchianism.³⁶ Shortly afterwards he intervened once more in Arabia, where some were maintaining that the soul dies with the body but will rise again with it. An important council was called, and Origen was asked to go there. He was successful in bringing back to the truth those who had allowed themselves to be led astray.³⁷

These many interventions testify to Origen's prestige; it was certainly confined to the East, but undoubtedly was very widespread there.³⁸ Suddenly the Decian Persecution broke out. Origen's old friend, Alexander of Jerusalem, died in prison;³⁹ Origen himself was put in prison and subjected to torture. "The wicked demon made him in a special way the object of his efforts . . . he was subjected to chains and tortures, cruelties on all his body, pains inflicted by fire, and the tortures of the dungeons beneath the prison; during a number of days his feet were placed in stocks, in the fourth hole, and he was threatened with fire."⁴⁰

³³ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxvi, 3-4. Fabian was Pope from 236 to 250. We have explained above why Origen took steps at Rome under Fabian which he does not seem to have taken under Pontian. On this collection of Origen's letters, cf. Harnack, *Die Briefsammlung des Apostels Paulus und die anderen vorkonstantinischen christlichen Briefsammlungen*, ch. iv, pp. 41-52, *Die Sammlung der Briefe des Origenes*. One of the most interesting documents in this correspondence is the letter of Julius the African concerning the story of Suzanna (*ibid.*, pp. 45-47). On Julius the African, cf. Puech, *Les Apologistes grecs*, pp. 465-477.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, VI, xxxii, 2: "Being then at Athens, he finished his commentaries on *Ezechiel*, and began those on the *Canticle of Canticles*, continuing them as far as the fifth book. When he returned to Cæsarea, he carried them on to the end, that is, to the tenth book."

³⁵ Letter to Julius the African, xv.

³⁶ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxiii, 1-3; Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, lxx.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, VI, xxxvii. We have pointed out a similar error in Tatian (cf. Bk. II, p. 574).

³⁸ We may add to the journeys we have mentioned, a visit to the holy places. Origen profited by his prolonged stay in Palestine, and followed "the footsteps of Jesus, his disciples and the prophets" (*In Joann.*, VI, xl, 204).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, VI, xxxix, 3.

⁴⁰ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxix, 5.

In these sufferings, heroically supported, the aged master had one consolation: he received an affectionate letter from his old bishop, Dionysius of Alexandria. On the death of Heraclas (247) Dionysius had succeeded to the see. But he had done no more than his predecessor in the matter of recalling his master to Alexandria. It is difficult not to conclude that Origen's teaching was the chief cause of this long-standing mistrust, even among his own disciples. But at the time of the persecution, Dionysius wrote to Origen as a confessor of the faith, a letter "on martyrdom."⁴¹ He also wrote concerning the Bishop of Jerusalem: "As for Alexander, that admirable man who was in prison, he has died a holy death."⁴² We understand why Eusebius has quoted this testimony: it sealed the reconciliation between Alexandria and Jerusalem. Shortly afterwards, Origen died, probably in consequence of his tortures.⁴³

Sixteen years earlier, Hippolytus and Pontian had been reconciled in martyrdom; seven years later, Cyprian would die a martyr's death in his turn, and St. Augustine would write concerning him: "If in this fruitful vine there was anything to prune away, the heavenly Father performed this cleansing action by his death." Origen did not, like these two saints, have the glory of dying a martyr, but like them he drank the chalice of the Lord, that chalice of salvation and redemption which he had so ardently desired.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, VI, xlv, 2.

⁴² *Ibid.*, VI, xlv, 4.

⁴³ Eusebius has only a very brief reference to his death: "Decius did not reign for two whole years, and as soon as he was slain with his children, Gallus succeeded him. At that moment, Origen, having completed his sixty-ninth year, died." The death of Decius took place in the summer of 251.

⁴⁴ *Exhort. to martyrdom*, xxix-xxx.

APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS AND MANICHÆISM

§ 1. APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE¹

New Testament Apocrypha

TOWARDS the end of the second century and during the first years of the third, there appeared fairly generally in the East, and especially in Asia, Syria and Egypt, some so-called Gospels, Acts of Apostles, epistles and apocalypses. The Church did not recognise these works as inspired; in some places she tolerated them; but normally she regarded them with suspicion and even condemned them.² This reserve and severity were necessary in order to maintain the canon of the New Testament in all its strictness, and also in order to preserve the faithful from errors, not only historical but also doctrinal, which were springing up in this apocryphal literature. Subsequently, in the Middle Ages, the former danger seemed to have vanished: the canonical books were by that time in unquestioned possession of their exclusive authority and had no longer anything to fear through the spread of the apocryphal works. As

¹ Bibliography.—Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, 2nd edn., 1876; Lipsius-Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum apocrypha*, Leipzig, 1891-1903, 3 vols.; E. Preuschen, *Antilegomena*, Giessen, 1905; Bousquet and Amann, *Les Apocryphes du Nouveau Testament*, 3 vols. published so far; *Le Protévangile de Jacques*, by Amann, 1910; *Les Actes de Paul*, by Vouaux, 1913; *Les Actes de Pierre*, by Vouaux, 1922; E. Hennecke, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, 2nd edn., Tübingen, 1923; E. Hennecke, *Handbuch zu den neutestamentlichen Apokryphen*, 1914, 2 vols.: the first contains a German translation of the texts with introductions; the second contains notes; M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford 1924; E. Amann, art. *Apocryphes du Nouveau Testament*, in *Supplément to the Dictionnaire de la Bible*, cols. 460-533; G. Bardy, art. *Apocryphes in Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Vol. II, pp. 752-765. Editions and studies on the various works will be mentioned below.

² Towards the end of the fourth century, the Priscillianists attributed to the apocryphal works an authority to which they had no claim. Cf. Priscillian, *Libre de fide et de apocryphis*, ed. Schepps, in the *Vienna Corpus*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 44-61. The Church protested against this innovation: cf. Innocent I, *Letters to Exuperius of Toulouse* (*Epist.*, vi, 7, in Migne, P.L., Vol. XX, 501-502); Decree of Gelasius, *De libris recipiendis et non recipiendis*, A.D. 496 (Migne, P.L., Vol. LIX); cf. Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, Vol. II, i, pp. 244-246, 259-267.

for the danger of heresy, this was averted by purifying the books, in order to seek beneath Gnostic accretions some harmless primitive tradition. Literature and the religious arts could then utilise without scruple this fruitful source, which was thus thought to have been purified.

The interest aroused at first by these old books diminished later on when it was more clearly realised that the "legends" they contain are for the most part only the work of imagination. Even so, provided we do not seek in them the authentic history of the apostles, and still less that of Christ, we may still find in them the religious ideas of the Christians who wrote them.

About the year 200, Tertullian, having occasion in his *Treatise on Baptism*³ to mention the *Acts of Paul*, writes thus: "In Asia, the priest who had forged this work, as though to complete the authority of Paul by his own, was convicted by his own admission that he had done it through love for Paul, and was deprived." In this incident we are shown the Church's severity when there was a question of defending the piety of the faithful against those who forged apocryphal *Acts*; we see also the kind of excuse advanced by their authors: they wrote through love of the apostles. The canonical Scriptures had, in their view, said too little about the apostles, their preaching, and above all their martyrdom; the apocryphal works provided the faithful with the circumstantial accounts they desired; there should be *Acts* of John, Paul, Peter, Andrew, Thomas, Philip. The same pious curiosity wanted to know more about the childhood of Jesus; it desired greater knowledge about Mary, Joseph and the whole family of the Lord: all this will be provided by the *Protevangelium* of James, the *Gospels of the Infancy*, the *Gospel of the Birth of Mary*, and the *Gospel of Joseph the Carpenter*. Other apocryphal works will contain accounts of the Passion, the Descent into Hell, and of the Resurrection of Jesus; there will also be *Apocalypses* of Peter, Paul and Thomas, a collective *Letter from the Apostles*, and apocryphal *Letters of St. Paul*.

Popular Literature

We need not describe all this literature here in detail. We must confine ourselves to the books which we can date in the second

³ *De baptismo*, xvii.

century or the first years of the third.⁴ Moreover, these are by far the most interesting ones. If we study them as a whole, we notice that they possess several common features. The first and most apparent of these is that they set forth, not theological speculation, but popular piety. They are contemporary with the *Stromata* and the treatise *De principiis*. Between these two groups the distance is great, as between the *Summa Theologica* and the *Golden Legend*; after studying the works of Clement and Origen, it is pleasant to read these pious and simple imaginative writings in which Christian folk then delighted.

Virginity

If we try to discover the religious ideas which are most prominent in them, we notice in the first place the love of virginity. This is the chief theme of the *Protevangeliium* of James;⁵ it is also one of the doctrines most constantly preached in the apocryphal Acts. The story of Paul and Thecla has charmed many generations of Christians. Certainly, as we shall point out later on, we notice

⁴ These are: the *Gospel of Peter*, ed. Vaganay, 1930 (it seems to belong to 120 to 130, and to have been written in Syria); the *Protevangeliium of James*, ed. Amann, 1910, ed. Michel, 1911 (written between 150 and 180); the first two parts, concerning the infancy of Mary and the birth of Jesus, belong to the first half of the second century (cf. Amann, art. *Apocryphes*, col. 483, the book in the form we have it to-day hardly goes back earlier than the fifth century); the *Acts of John* (shortly after 150, in Asia); the *Acts of Paul* (between 160 and 170, perhaps at Antioch in Pisidia); the *Acts of Peter* (about 200, probably in Asia); the *Acts of Thomas* (in a Synac-speaking country, about the beginning of the third century); the *Acts of Andrew* (about the beginning of the third century, in an unknown country); the *Apocalypse of Peter* (before 180, perhaps towards the end of the reign of Hadrian, in Egypt); the *Letter of the Apostles*, ed. by Guerrier, in *Patrologie Orientale*, Vol. IX, 1913, under the title: *The Testament in Galilee of Our Lord Jesus Christ*; by C. Schmidt, Leipzig, 1919: *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jungern nach der Auferstehung* (before 180, cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 399, in Asia, *ibid.*, p. 370).

⁵ Not only does the author defend the virginity of Mary in her conception, childbirth, and her whole life, but he is even careful about legal purity: Anne consecrated Mary to the Lord before her birth (iv, 1); she preserved her from all impure contact: "When she was six months old, her mother put her on the ground to see if she could stand upright. The child took seven steps and returned to her mother, who lifted her up saying: 'As the Lord my God liveth, you must not walk upon this ground until I have taken you to the Lord's Temple.' And she made a sanctuary in her bedroom, and did not let her take hold of anything impure or soiled. And she called those of the daughters of the Hebrews who were without stain, and these amused her" (vi, 1). On all this, cf. Amann, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-40.

in it some exaggeration in the preaching of continence, but in spite of all this, one is struck by the high ideal set forth by the Apostle, and still more perhaps by the irresistible impression it produced on Thecla: here we have an example of a Christian conquest, rescuing a soul from its pagan surroundings and giving it to Christ. The author of these *Acts* pictures Paul at Iconium in the house of Onesiphorus. It is a joyful assembly; they kneel down and pray, they break bread, and talk of continence and the resurrection. Paul says:

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are they who keep their flesh chaste, for they shall be the temple of God.

Blessed are the continent, for God will converse with them.

Blessed are they who have renounced this world, for they shall be pleasing to God.

Blessed are they who have wives as though they had not, for they shall have God for an inheritance.

Blessed are they who fear God, for they shall be the angels of God.⁶

This discourse continues; a young girl hears it from the window of a neighbouring house. She is a virgin, espoused to Thamyris.

Night and day she listened to the word of God preached by Paul concerning chastity, faith in Christ, and prayer. She did not move from the window, and overwhelmed with joy, she was drawn to the faith. And as she saw many women and virgins introduced to Paul, she wished herself to be considered worthy to stand face to face with Paul and to hear the word of Christ. For she had not yet seen Paul's features, but had only heard his speech.⁷

Did this ardent preaching and the attraction it exercised exceed the bounds of orthodoxy? We cannot affirm this in the case of the *Acts of Paul*,⁸ and possibly the *Acts of Peter* are equally free.⁹ On

⁶ *Acts of Paul*, v, p. 154. This ideal is clearly narrower than that of the beatitudes in the Gospel. Cf. J. Lebreton, *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 150, n. But it would be unfair to regard the author as a sectary: he exalts virginity, but without condemning marriage as was done by the encratic Gnostics. Cf. the note by Vouaux on this text p. 154.

⁷ *Acts of Paul*, vii, p. 158.

⁸ Cf. Vouaux, *Les Actes de Paul*, pp. 79-80. But we must note what is said of the preaching of Paul in ch. xii: "He separates the young men from the women, and virgins from men, saying: 'There can be no resurrection for you unless you remain chaste, and if instead of soiling your flesh you keep it pure.'"

⁹ Here, however, the writer goes further: "Many women, influenced by the preaching on chastity, separated from their husbands; also men kept away from

the other hand, the condemnation of marriage is manifest in the *Acts* of John, Thomas, and Andrew. In a fragment of the *Acts of John*, the apostle, invited to a wedding, explains to the spouse that the conjugal act is a sin. After a vehement diatribe,¹⁰ he concludes thus:

Now that you have heard this, my children, unite yourselves by an inseparable, true and holy marriage, waiting for the one incomparable and true Spouse who comes from Heaven, Christ the eternal Spouse.¹¹

In another place, in the Greek text of the *Acts*, we read that Drusiana, pressed by her husband Andronicus, refuses him the conjugal act, in spite of his threats of death: "She much preferred to die rather than to accomplish this horror."¹²

In the *Acts of Thomas*, on the wedding day of the king's daughter Christ appears to the young spouses in the guise of the twin brother of Thomas, and says to them: "Know that if you renounce this unclean union, you will become holy and pure temples, be delivered from all kinds of pains and sufferings, and be no longer troubled by the cares of life and of children, whose end is death. . . ."¹³

the beds of their wives, because they wished to honour God in holiness and chastity" (ch. xxxiv; cf. xxxiii). Vouaux writes this note (*op. cit.*, *Introduction*, p. 81): "The *Acts of Peter* seem to attack marriage. But it must be borne in mind that that is but an ascetical ideal, which does not seem to correspond to a historic reality, and merely expresses the idea which the author had of a period greatly venerated by him."

¹⁰ This fragment, conserved in Latin in a Wurtzburg MS., has been edited by Dom D. de Bruyne, in *Revue Bénédictine*, Vol. XXV, 1908, p. 156. The following few lines will show its tone: "Filioli, dum adhuc caro vestra munda est et intactum corpus habetis nec pereuntes nec sordidati ab inimicissimo et impudentissimo sanctimonii satana; scitote ergo plenius mysterium conjunctionis: experimentum est serpentis, doctrinæ ignorantia, seminis injuria, mortis charisma, extinctionis munus, . . . insultatio inimici, impedimentum quod a domino separat, initium inobaudienciæ, vitæ finis, et mors."

¹¹ On this text cf. James, *op. cit.*, p. 266. Other fragments of similar origin and the same character will be found in the article by Dom de Bruyne.

¹² Ch. lxiii. See also the discourse of John to Andronicus in ch. lxxviii: to console him on the death of his wife, he puts before him all the cares which come from a wife and children. These low considerations resemble the ethics of the Cynics rather than the teaching of St. Paul.

¹³ Ch. xii. We find the same doctrine in the discourse of Thomas at Mygdonia (ch. lxxxviii): "Thy unclean union with thy husband will be of no service to thee if thou art deprived of the true union." We find the same in the discourse of Andrew to Maximilla to confirm him in his distaste "for a life which is shameful and unclean" (*Acts of Andrew*, v).

Encratism

In all these texts, what is apparent is not only the love of chastity but also a horror of marriage, which is regarded as a shameful defilement. In order to turn young people away from it more effectively, the chief characters in the *Acts* do not content themselves, as did St. Paul, with preaching the love of the Lord and the happiness of belonging unreservedly to him; they bring forward considerations of a low egoism concerning the cares of marriage and the difficulties of children. These features reveal, not the ideal of purity preached by the Church, but Encratic Gnosticism, and in point of fact the books which manifest them, the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Thomas*, are precisely those which clearly show a Gnostic influence.¹⁴

Piety, like moral teaching, appears in these *Acts*, sometimes in a pure form and sometimes rather corrupted. Its warm aspiration is, in the *Acts of Paul and Peter*, Christian for the most part, but in the *Acts of John and Thomas* it is weighed down with the heavy fumes of Gnosticism.

The Christ

The centre of religion, and the One to whom prayer is usually addressed, is Christ. This is one of the characteristic features of popular piety at this period. The official liturgical prayer is addressed generally to God the Father, but the prayers of Christians in their daily life, and especially the prayers of martyrs in their agony, are addressed to Christ.¹⁵ Accordingly, we are not surprised to find this particular orientation of prayer in these *Acts of Apostles* which are above all *Acts of Martyrs*.

These prayers are often moving and touching in their character. Thus, in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, the latter, returning to Iconium, enters the house of Onesiphorus, where previously she had heard the preaching of Paul. She weeps and cries out:

¹⁴ On this encratic tendency, cf. Bardy, *art. cit.*, cols. 756-758.

¹⁵ Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 174-247. Origen, in his *Treatise on Prayer*, chs. xv and xvi, condemns these prayers of the simple: "In their excessive simplicity, some err through foolishness, through lack of consideration and attention: they pray to the Son either with the Father or without the Father." But Origen himself more than once in his own religious practice gives the lie to the strictness of his theory. In his homilies, speaking to the simple and praying with them, he prays as they do. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 239-242; *Revue d'histoire ecclési.*, Vol. XX, 1924, pp. 19-27 and *infra*, p. 1082.

O my God, God of this house in which the light shone forth for me, Christ Jesus, Son of God, my succour in prison, my succour before the governors, my succour in the fire, my succour among the beasts, thou art truly God, and to thee be glory for ever, Amen.¹⁶

St. Peter, when fastened to his cross, thanks Christ in a long prayer which ends in an exhortation to the faithful:

Thou art to me a father, thou art to me a mother, thou are to me a brother, a friend, a servant, a steward; thou art the whole, and the whole is in thee; thou art being, and there is no other thing which is save thee alone. You also, my brethren, must take refuge in him, and having learnt that in him alone you exist, you will obtain that of which he speaks to you, that which the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man. We ask thee therefore that which thou hast promised to give us, O Jesus without stain, we praise thee, we give thee thanks, we recognise in glorifying thee, we who are still weak, that thou alone art God and that there is no other, to whom be glory now and for ever and ever, Amen.¹⁷

We sometimes find the same idea in the eucharistic prayers. Thus, we read in the *Acts of Thomas*:

O Jesus, who hast given us the grace to be participators in the eucharist of thy holy body and thy blood, behold we dare to approach thy eucharist, and to call upon thy holy name. Come and unite thyself to us.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, xlii.

¹⁷ *Martyrdom*, xxxix. On the character of this prayer, cf. the note by Vouaux, p. 454, and *Historie du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 236. We must not infer from this prayer that the author confuses the Father and the Son, any more than from the exclamation of Anchaes in the *Acts of Paul*: "There is no other than Jesus Christ, the Son of the Blessed One, to whom be glory for ever" (ed. James, p. 271).

¹⁸ *Acts of Thomas*, xlix. The chapter which immediately follows continues the story of this eucharist, inserting a long prayer to the Holy Spirit which is clearly of Gnostic origin: "Come O perfect compassion; come O communion of the male; come thou who knowest the mysteries of him who is chosen; come thou who sharest in all the combats of the noble athlete; come O rest which shows the greatness of the whole greatness; come thou who dost manifest hidden things, and givest knowledge of ineffable things; the holy dove which generates the two twins; come O hidden mother; come thou who dost manifest thyself in thy actions, who givest joy and repose to those who unite themselves to thee; come and unite thyself to us in this eucharist which we celebrate in thy name, and in the agape which reunites us at thy call." The difference between these two chapters xlix and l is evident even at first reading. But we must remember that the whole book of the *Acts of Thomas* is suspect. Cf. G. Bornkamm, *Mythos und Legende in den apokryphen Thomas-Akten*, Göttingen, 1933, and *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIII, 1933, pp. 368-369.

With this we may compare the following eucharistic prayer we read in the *Acts of John*:

O thou who hast woven this crown in thy hair, O Jesus; thou who hast adorned the imperishable flower of thy countenance with all these flowers; thou who has given us these words; thou who alone takest care of thy servants, the one doctor who healest them through love; thou the only gracious and humble, the only merciful and good; the only saviour and just one; thou who ever seest all things, art in all things, art present everywhere, containest all things, fillest all things, Christ Jesus, God and Lord; thou who by thy gifts and thy mercy protectest those who hope in thee; thou who knowest perfectly the cunning of our perpetual enemy and all the assaults which he plans against us; thou the one Lord, come to the help of thy servants. Yes, Lord.

Having asked for bread, the apostle John gives thanks thus:

What praise, what offering, what eucharist shall we invoke in breaking this bread, other than thee only, Lord Jesus? We glorify thy name spoken by the Son. We glorify thine entrance through the door. We glorify thy resurrection which thou hast made known to us. We glorify thy way. We glorify thy seed, the word, grace, faith, salt, the precious stone, the treasure, the plough, the net, the greatness, the diadem, him who for our sakes has been called the Son of Man, him who has given us truth, rest, knowledge, power, the commandment, trust, hope, love, liberty, and refuge in thyself. For thou only art, O Lord, the root of immortality and the source of incorruptibility and the foundation of the ages. And thou hast now been called by all these names for our sakes in order that, invoking thee by all these names, we may know thy greatness which we have not known until now, but which is visible only to the pure, and represented in the one man who is thine.¹⁹

These prayers are touching, but while their fervour moves us, we are more than once disconcerted by their overladen character, and their tone and tendency, which are not always those of the Gospel. Some phrases are still more disturbing, and have a plainly Gnostic character.²⁰ With the prayers we have just described we can compare some invocations of the Cross. The mystery of the Cross is especially dear to the authors of the *Acts*. Sometimes the religious tone is simple and pure, as in this prayer of St. Andrew:

¹⁹ *Acts of John*, cviii and cix; cf. Bardy, *art. cit.*, col. 760.

²⁰ We have noticed this in the *Acts of Thomas*, *supra*, p. 992, n. 18: we shall also find it in the *Acts of John*, xciv-xcvi, *infra*, p. 995.

Hail, Cross which has been consecrated by the body of Christ. . . . Cross long desired, dearly loved, unceasingly sought after and now at last prepared for my soul which desireth thee, receive me and give me back to my Master, so that he may receive me through thee who hath redeemed me through thee.²¹

At other times we are overwhelmed by a pretentious rhetoric. Thus, St. Peter when crucified head downwards finds in this torture the key to the mystery of nature.²² Elsewhere things are worse, and we find ourselves in a complete Gnosticism. Thus in the *Acts of John*, at the hour of the crucifixion, when darkness covers the earth, John flies to the Mount of Olives:

My Lord appeared to me in the midst of the cave, wholly illumined it, and said to me: "John, because of the crowd which is below in Jerusalem I am crucified and pierced by the lances and by the reeds, and given vinegar and gall to drink. But to thee I speak, listen to my word. . . ." And he showed me a cross of light which was upright . . . and I saw at the top of the cross the Lord himself. He had no form; he was only a voice, a voice, not as those which we are accustomed to hear,

²¹ *Passio Andreæ*, x. The date of this text is uncertain; cf. Hennecke, *Apokryphen*, pp. 249-251.

²² "Know the mystery of all nature, and what was the beginning of all things. The first man, of whose race I bear the image with the head upside down, shows a nature different from what it was once; for it became dead, having no movement. Being upside down, he who had thrown down his first state organised the whole order of the world in the image of his vocation, upside down as he was, and showed as right that which was left, and left that which was right; and he changed all the signs of his nature, to the point of considering beautiful that which is not, and as good that which is evil. . . . This is the idea I put before your eyes; and the way in which you see me hanging is the image of the man who was the first to be born. Therefore, my beloved, you who now hear this, and you who are about to hear it, must depart from this primitive error and raise yourselves up. For it is fitting to be fastened to the cross of Christ, who is the extended, unique and sole Word, of whom the Spirit says: 'What then is Christ, if not the Word, the echo of God?' Hence this word will be the upright part of the cross, to which I am crucified; the echo will be the cross piece, the nature of man; and the nail which fastens the transversal part to the upright part in the centre, is conversion and repentance by man." (*Martyrdom*, xxxviii, pp. 442-450.)

This long discourse, of which we quote only a part, is quite unbelievable at such a moment. We notice in it the symbolism of the Cross, and that of the elements of right and left: these speculations were then fairly frequent on the frontiers of Gnosticism and authentic Christianity. For the symbolism of the Cross, cf. Justin, *Apol.*, I, lx; *Acts of John*, xcvi; *Acts of Andrew*, xx; for the forces of right and left, *Acts of John*, xcvi; *Acts of Philip*, cxl; *Acts of Thomas*, xcii; cf. Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, p. 66; *Clementine Homilies*, ii, 16; vii, 2; vii, 3; xx, 3.

but a voice which was sweet and beautiful, and truly the voice of a God.

This luminous and formless apparition explains the mystery of the Cross:

. . . The Cross is not this cross of wood which you will see on the way down from here; and I am not the one who is fastened to it; I whom you do not see now, but whose voice alone you hear. People have believed me to be what I am not. I am not what I was according to the others, the crowd; they will say mean and unworthy things of me. The place of rest can neither be seen nor described; much less can I, the Lord, be seen. . . . As long as you do not say you are wholly mine, I am not what I am (*or was*). But if you listen to me, in listening you shall be what I am, and I shall be what I was in possessing thee, as I am with myself. For it is by me that you are that (*which I am*). As for the crowd, have no care; despise those who are outside the mystery. Know that I am wholly with the Father and the Father with me.²³

Docetism

We see here the final stage of this sentimental and strange mysticism, so far removed from authentic Christianity, and reserved for a little group of initiates who think they are the recipients of divine mysteries and who despise the mass of the faithful. The contempt for the flesh which is affirmed in the condemnation of marriage perverts Christology by reducing the flesh of Christ to a mere appearance. This Docetism, evident in the interpretation of the Passion, is also manifest in the preceding chapters. John, recalling his memories of his relations with Jesus, depicts him as taking all forms; when he calls the sons of Zebedee on the borders of the Lake, he shows himself to James in the form of a child and to John as a fine young man. On other occasions he seems small and ugly, and then so great that his head touches the sky.

Sometimes I wished to take hold of him, and I found a material and solid body; another day, when I touched him I felt an immaterial, incorporeal, and, as it were, an in-existent substance. When he was invited by a certain Pharisee, we ourselves went with him. Our hosts gave a piece of bread to each one of us. He also took one; he blessed it and shared it amongst us. A small piece satisfied us, and our own pieces of

²³ *Acts of John*, xcvi-c.

bread remained intact, and those who had invited him were in amazement. Often when I walked with him I looked for the imprint of his footsteps on the ground, for I saw him raised up from the ground; but never was I able to see any imprint.²⁴

Some fragments of these chapters were read at the Council of Constantinople in 754, and led to a fresh condemnation of the *Acts of John*.²⁵ This condemnation cannot surprise us, for as the first editor of the work wrote, "this whole discourse is the best popular exposition we possess of the Docetic view of Our Lord's Person."²⁶

Gnostic Influences

In these same chapters of the *Acts of John*, we find a Gnostic hymn which the Priscillianist heretics were still accustomed to recite in the time of St. Augustine:²⁷

Before being seized by the wicked Jews, [Jesus] gathered us all together and said to us:

"Before I am delivered up to these men, let us sing to the Father, and then let us go to that which is to come to pass." He bade us form a circle, holding each other by the hand, with himself in the midst. He said to us: "Answer me Amen." Then he began the hymn:

"Glory to thee, O Father."

And we who formed the circle, said "Amen."

"Glory to thee, O Word, Glory to thee, O Grace, Amen."

"Glory to thee, Holy Spirit. Glory to thy Glory, Amen."

"We praise thee, O Father. We thank thee, O Light in which there dwells no darkness. Amen."

While we give thanks, I say:

"I want to be saved, and I want to save. Amen."

"I want to be delivered, and I want to deliver. Amen."

"I want to be wounded, and I want to wound. Amen."

"I want to be born, and I want to bear. Amen."

²⁴ *Ibid.*, lxxxviii-xciv. These chapters and the following ones (to ch. cv) were published for the first time by James in 1897, from a Vienna MS. (*Apocrypha anecdota*, II, *Texts and Studies*, V, 1).

²⁵ Cf. James, *op. cit.*, p. xii.

²⁶ *Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 250. We may add that in the other apocryphal books, while this Docetism is not so plainly set forth it is often implicit in the narratives or the discourses: *Acts of Peter*, xxi; *Acts of Thomas*, xlviii, cliii; *Acts of John*, lxxxii, etc. Cf. Hennecke, *Apokryphen*, p. 173, and W. Bauer, *Das Leben Jesu im Zeitalter der neutestamentlichen Apokryphen*, Tübingen, 1909, pp. 40-45.

²⁷ Augustine, *Epist.*, ccxxxvii, *ad Ceretrum*.

"I want to eat, and I want to be eaten. Amen.

"I want to hear, and I want to be heard. Amen.

"I want to be understood, being all intelligence. Amen.

"I want to be washed, and I want to wash. Amen.

"Grace dances. I want to play the flute. Take part all of you in the dance. Amen.

"I want to lament. Weep, all of you. Amen.

"The ogdoad sings with us. Amen.

"The number twelve dances above. Amen.

"The whole takes part in the dance. Amen.

"Whosoever dances not, does not know what is coming. Amen. . . ."

This strange hymn has led to many commentaries. We cannot attempt here to solve its problems; it suffices to indicate its character. The chants with a refrain, accompanied by a sacred dance, are not without parallels in Hellenic and Gnostic literature.²⁸ Whether the one we have just quoted was in fact derived from an earlier source, or composed after these models by the author of the *Acts*, is difficult to say and is comparatively unimportant. But what is of great interest is to see that at this time such compositions could lead astray folk who considered themselves Christians, and could still exercise their attraction three centuries later in certain heretical circles.

Religious Romances

The features which we have pointed out in the apocryphal *Acts* indicate certain tendencies in popular piety, and it is from that standpoint that we have considered them. But for that purpose we have had to isolate them from the narratives in which they are found. It must be admitted that these narratives are, on the whole, disconcerting for a Christian reader.

They are works of the imagination, closely related to the religious romances of the period. We are given accounts of incidents in which history is treated with complete freedom, and geography also. What is still more regrettable is that the authors of the *Acts* did what was done by the romantic writers of their time; they utilised episodes created by their predecessors, often of doubtful religious or moral value. Thus the author of the *Acts of John*, who was so zealous in preaching chastity, nevertheless appropriated the

²⁸ Cf. Hennecke, *Apokryphen*, p. 172.

story of the matron of Ephesus. He considered he had sufficiently corrected it by making the guilty receive punishment, but he did not really destroy its grossly immoral character.²⁹ Still more frequently, elements borrowed in this way display the pagan or Gnostic character they possessed originally: this is the case with the myth of the soul which we read in the *Acts of Thomas*.³⁰

*The Clementine Apocrypha*³¹

The Clementine apocrypha are almost contemporary with the apocryphal *Acts* we have just studied, and in many features of literary composition they resemble them. These too are imaginative

²⁹ *Acts of John*, lxxiii-lxxvi: this is the story of Drusiana and Callimachus. Cf. Hennecke, *Handbuch*, p. 520. In its pagan and grossly indecent form the story of the matron of Ephesus is found in Petronius, *Satyricon*, cxi et seq.

³⁰ *Acts*, cviii-cxiii. This myth or chant is found in the Syriac text, and has been translated by A. A. Bevan, *The Hymn of the Soul*, in *Texts and Studies*, Vol. V, 3 (Cambridge, 1897), by G. Hoffmann in *Zeitschr. f. N. T. W.*, Vol. IV, 1903, pp. 273-294; while the Greek text is in *Acta Thomæ*, cviii-cxiii. A son of a king, clothed while yet a child in a robe woven with gold and covered with precious stones, is deprived of it and sent from the East to Egypt in order to find a pearl guarded by a dragon. In Egypt he is led astray, and eats Egyptian food; immediately he forgets his origin and his mission, and becomes, like the other Egyptians, subject to the king of the country. But his father hears of this, and sends him a letter in which he reminds him of his real identity, and of the glorious robe he once wore. Reading the letter, the exile comes to himself, triumphs over the dragon, seizes the pearl, and returns to his father. His royal vestment is given back to him, and when he sees it he recognises himself.

This chant is prior to the redaction of the *Acts*; it is attributed by many to Bardesane, by V. Burch to Cerdon (*Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. XIX, 1918, pp. 145-161). Bornkamm (*op. cit.*, pp. 111-117) sees in this "hymn of the Redeemer" an old Jewish Gnostic hymn concerning the salvation of Israel brought back from Egypt; the old Iranian myth of a redeemed redeemer was, it is suggested, modified later in order to be applied to Mani.

³¹ Editions: The *Recognitions* will be found in Migne's *Greek Patrology*, with the Latin translation by Rufinus, Vol. I, 1157-1455; the *Homilies* in Greek text, *ibid.*, Vol. II, 25-468. P. de Lagarde published in 1861 the *Recognitions* in a Syriac translation; in 1865 the *Homilies* in Greek text. *Letters to Virgins*, Syriac text and Latin translation in Migne, P.G., Vol. I, 349-452.

Studies: H. Waitz, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. XXV, 4, Leipzig, 1904; C. Schmidt, *Studien zu den Pseudo-Clementinen*, *ibid.*, Vol. XLVI, 1, Leipzig, 1929; O. Cullmann, *Le problème littéraire et historique du roman pseudo-clementin*, Paris, 1930. [See also Abbot Chapman's article in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV—Tr.]

We cannot deal here with the discussion of the literary problem, which is hotly disputed and very obscure. According to Waitz, the *Recognitions* and the *Homilies* are independent revisions of a work which served as a basis for both. This work, composed at Rome by a Catholic under Alexander Severus between

accounts of events and travels, utilising earlier sources, Jewish or pagan. Among these sources we notice in the first place the story of rediscovery which occupies a prominent place in the *Homilies* and the chief part of the *Recognitions*.³² We can also detect a Jewish apology which the editor has inserted into his narrative.³³ Clement of Rome appears as one of the heroes and the narrator of these stories, hence their name of "Clementines."

Celibacy and Marriage

While the literary form of the two categories of apocrypha we are considering here is very similar, their moral and religious tendencies differ profoundly. In the apocryphal *Acts*, virginity is constantly preached, not only as an ideal of perfection but often as a strict duty. In the Clementine apocrypha, on the contrary, celibacy is regarded with suspicion. These books urge marriage not only on

220 and 230, itself depends on two chief sources: the *Preaching of Peter* and the *Acts of Peter*; the first of these two texts was, it is suggested, written in Palestine, probably at Cæsarea, in Judeo-Christian circles, between 135 and 138, the second at Antioch between 150 and 230. According to Schmidt, the *Acts of Peter* utilised in the Clementines are the *Acts* composed about 200 in Asia Minor, which we have in great part in the text of the MS. of Vercelli (Vouaux, *Actes de Pierre*, pp. 230 *et seq.*). The basic work was composed, not at Rome but in Palestinian Syria, probably in Transjordan, about the same date as the *Didascalia*, with which it is closely connected, i.e. about 220-230. As for the sources of this basic work, Schmidt distinguishes, besides the *Acts of Peter*, the *Preaching of Peter*, which would also belong about the year 200; a Jewish apology, prior to 135; and a story of rediscovery, dating in the year 200. According to Schmidt, the author of the *Recognitions* knew and utilised the *Homilies*. Cullmann has followed in the main Schmidt's hypothesis; the rectifications he has suggested do not seem to be altogether justified.

On this literary problem, see also the articles by Cerfaux in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XV, 1925, pp. 489-511; Vol. XVI, 1926, pp. 5-20; Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 143-163; article by Cadiou, *ibid.*, Vol. XX, 1930, pp. 506-528; Schwartz, in *Zeitschr. f. N. T. W.*, Vol. XXXI, 1932, pp. 151-199.

³² Matilda, married to Faustus and the mother of three children, Faustinus, Faustinianus and Clement, left Rome for Athens with her two eldest children. The three travellers disappeared; Faustus set out to look for them but disappeared in his turn. Clement only was left, and he went through the world in quest of the truth; he found Peter and attached himself to him, then he discovered in succession his mother, brothers and father.

³³ On this apology, cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-298; Cullmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 116 *et seq.* In the *Homilies*, iv-vi, Clement has a discussion at Tyre with Appion; in the *Recognitions*, viii-x, the discussion takes place at Laodicea; Appion does not appear in it, but only Faustus, Clement Nicetus and Aquila, with Peter presiding. In each case the same themes are treated: polytheism, astrology and Providence.

young people, but also on persons advanced in age, for fear lest the heat of concupiscence should introduce a plague into the Church through fornication and adultery. For the sake of chastity, not only the presbyters but all Christians should hasten to marry.³⁴

This suspicion in regard to celibacy does not come from an authentic Christian tradition; we find it among the Ebionites, as they are described by Epiphanius;³⁵ we find it also in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, composed in Transjordanian in the first half of the third century.³⁶

This unfavourable attitude towards celibacy was certainly not universal in the Eastern Church at that time. The writings of Origen and his own personal practice bear witness to the esteem in which virginity was held. We find a still more explicit testimony in the *Letters to Virgins* written in the name of St. Clement.³⁷

The writings which we have been studying here, the apocryphal Clementines and the *Didascalia*, reveal to us the particular and very divergent tendencies of some Christian communities of Transjordanian in the first half of the third century.

The similarities which we have pointed out between these two groups of writings are shown not only in the doctrine concerning continency and marriage, but also in the concern for legal purity,

³⁴ *Homilies*, iii, 68. Peter himself lives with his wife: *Homilies*, xiii, 1.

³⁵ *Hær.*, XXX, xviii, 2-3: "They constrain young people to marry, even at unsuitable ages . . . and not only do they enter a first union, but if anyone wishes to break his first marriage and contract a second they allow this, and not only a second marriage but a third and even as far as a seventh."

³⁶ Ch. xxiii: "Take care to find wives for your children, and marry them when they are of age, lest in the heat of youth they commit fornication with pagans, and you become responsible for this before God in the day of judgment." As Dom Connolly remarks in his edition (p. xlv): "There is no mention in the *Didascalia* of an order of virgins, or of virginity at all. On the contrary, parents are warned to have their children married at an early age to save them from the dangers of incontinency. See especially chapters xvii and xxii." At the same time, in contrast to the Ebionites mentioned by Epiphanius, the author does not recommend a second marriage, and absolutely condemns a third: ch. xiv, pp. 130-131, and p. xliii. For the episcopate one should choose one who has been a good father and a good husband: "Si est castus, si uxorem castam aut fidelem habuit aut habet, si filios caste educavit et erudiens produxit. . . ."

³⁷ These two letters seem to have been written in Greek; they are conserved in a Syriac version, and in part in a Coptic version. They are commonly dated in the third century. The author seems to have been an Egyptian; the persons addressed are ascetics in Syria and Palestine; the hermit life is not yet organised, but already it is envisaged. Cf. F. Martinez, *L'Ascétisme chrétien pendant les trois premiers siècles de l'Eglise*, Paris, 1913, pp. 171-194.

the observance of the laws concerning forbidden foods, and by the ideas of the Law and of prophecy.³⁸ The same problems are often discussed, but the solutions proposed are frequently divergent and even opposed.

Thus, Peter, teaching the pagan masses the elements of Christianity, enjoins upon them ritual purity: a man should abstain from all intercourse with his wife when she is in her menstrual period;³⁹ married people should take a bath after they have had sexual intercourse.⁴⁰ Peter himself constantly bathed, and his disciples with him.⁴¹

In the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions*, Peter is a strict vegetarian: "I live only on bread and olives, and rarely eat vegetables; . . . for my spirit which beholds on high all the eternal goods does not look at any of those here below."⁴²

He thinks it is "against nature to eat animals"; the first to intro-

³⁸ These resemblances, which we can only briefly note here, are set forth in greater detail by C. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-292.

³⁹ *Hom.*, xi, 28, 30. Cf. *Recognitions*, vi, 10, 11: "Primo ut observet unusquisque ne menstruatæ mulieri misceatur, hoc enim execrabile duxit lex Dei." The *Didascalia* knows of these scruples; it mentions them in ch. xxvi, and usually it sets them on one side. But we read in the Latin translation, p. 255, 4: "Cum naturalia profluunt uxoribus vestris (nolite convenire illis) sed sustinete eas . . ." (the words in brackets have no counterpart in the Syriac). A little earlier (pp. 244-245), on the contrary, the author denounces these superstitious fears; he condemns women who think that during these seven days they have not the Holy Spirit; and also (pp. 242-243) the women who during these days abstain from all conjugal relations, do not receive the Eucharist, and do not pray.

⁴⁰ Same texts of the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions*; the *Didascalia* condemns these scruples: "Hæc igitur super omnes cogitate qui seminum cursus et adproximationes mulierum observant: nam quæ tales sunt observationes omnes stultæ et nocivæ sunt. Si enim cursum seminis quis passus et adproximans mulieri baptizetur, et stratum suum lavet; et erit illi fatigatio, numquam deficiens a baptismo et a lavatione rerum et a stratu suo; et nihil aliud poterit agere." Again (*ibid.*, p. 255): a man is not made unclean by his relations with his wife, but if the woman is not his wife, the sea itself would not suffice to wash away the stain. This text is compared with the statement of Theano, the Pythagorean, quoted by Clement, *Strom.*, IV, xix, 121, 3; she was asked how long a wife ought to wait, after sexual relations, before presenting herself at the temple. She replied: "If it was with her husband, she can go there at once; if it was with another man, never." The text of the *Didascalia* has been copied by the author of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, VI, xxax, 4.

⁴¹ *Recog.*, vi, 11: the principle is thus enunciated by Peter: "Bonum est et puritati conveniens etiam corpus aqua diluere." Similarly in *Hom.*, xi, 28: "Purify your soul from all evils by the heavenly understanding, and wash your body in the bath."

⁴² *Hom.*, xii, 6; *Recog.*, vii, 6.

duce this usage were the giants who were born to the fallen angels.⁴³ To have a meal is called in the *Homilies* "taking salt."⁴⁴ The Eucharist itself is celebrated with bread and salt.⁴⁵ The *Didascalía* is aware of men who preach this abstinence, but it regards them as heretics, condemned by the decree of the apostles.⁴⁶

The Law

The conception of the Law and of prophecy is much more fundamental than the moral ideas we have just examined. We must consider it as it appears successively in the Clementine apocrypha and then in the *Didascalía*; the two groups of writings do not display the same inspiration, but they may usefully be compared together.⁴⁷

The Law was given orally by Moses to the Seventy; it was not written until after his death; at the same time it was combined with additions which are erroneous and dangerous.⁴⁸ God allowed this contamination, in order that the Law might not suffice of itself;⁴⁹

⁴³ *Hom.*, viii, 15.

⁴⁴ *Hom.*, iv, 6; vi, 26; xi, 34; xiii, 8, 11; xiv, 1, 8; xv, 11; xix, 25; xx, 16.

⁴⁵ *Hom.*, xiv, 1; *Contestatio*, iv; cf. *Letter of Clement*, ix.

⁴⁶ *Didascalía*, xxiii: "Alii iterum ex ipsis neque carnem sumere docebant, dicentes ea quæ animam habent non debere manducari"; xxvi, pp. 241-243: "Observate igitur vos ab omni heretico, qui legem non utuntur neque profetas, de Deo omnipotenti non credentes inimicantur, et abstinent se a cibis et prohibent nubere, et resurgere in carne nolunt, tanquam nolentes manducare et bibere, sed demones volunt resurgere spiritales in fantasmiss."

⁴⁷ On the concept of the Law in the Clementine apocrypha, cf. Waitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 116 *et seq.*; Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 266 *et seq.*

⁴⁸ *Hom.*, iii, 47: "The Law of God was orally given by Moses to the seventy wise men charged with its transmission so that it might be the rule of life of those who would come after them. After the Assumption of Moses, it was written by someone, but not by Moses. . . . Later, in the time which followed Moses, after 500 or more years, it was deposited in the Temple which was then built. It remained there another 500 years, but was then destroyed by fire under Nabuchodonosor. Being thus written after Moses, and several times destroyed, it shows the prescience of Moses who, foreseeing its destruction, did not write it; but those who wrote it, and in ignorance did not foresee its destruction, showed that they were not prophets."

⁴⁹ *Recognitiones*, i, 21: "Quæ tamen manifeste quidem dicta, non tamen manifeste scripta sunt, in tantum ut cum leguntur, intelligi sine expositore non possint propter peccatum quod coadolevit hominibus." *Hom.*, ii, 38: "The Scriptures have been combined with many falsehoods, which came about thus: the prophet Moses, by the will of God, had given the Law and the solutions to seventy men chosen by him that they might be the guides of the people, shortly afterwards the Law, written down, was mingled with lying additions against the one God who made heaven and earth and all that they contain, the Evil One

and that no one should be able to understand it properly unless he were a "prudent changer."⁵⁰ It is therefore a dangerous presumption to think a mere reading of the Law enables us to understand it; we also need the traditional interpretation which the oral tradition of the Jews has preserved.⁵¹

The thesis developed in these works resembles in more than one feature that which the gnostic Ptolomy set forth in his *Letter to Flora*. This also found in the written Law different sources of unequal value: God, Moses, and the elders. Even the first source is not entirely pure: in the precepts laid down by God there are some things which are good without any mixture of evil, and it was of these the Saviour said: "I am come, not to destroy but to fulfil." But there are also some precepts consisting of good and evil mingled, and these the Saviour has abolished. Lastly there are some purely symbolical precepts, and the God who inspired this imperfect legislation is the Demiurge.⁵² Consequently we are free in regard to this legislation.

In contrast to this mythological conception, Irenæus had given a true and profound interpretation of the Law: it constituted an education which was severe in character, but also beneficial.⁵³

The *Didascalia* in turn offers an interpretation of the problem: ⁵⁴ at the beginning God gave to his people a Law which was good and holy; but when they fell into idolatry, the Jews received from God a second Law, *Deuterosis*, which was hard and intolerable. The Lord Jesus confirmed the first but abolished the second:

The second Law was imposed because of the worship of the golden calf and idolatry. But by baptism you have been delivered from idolatry,

having had the audacity to do this by a just judgment. And this came about with reason and judgment, in order that we might be able to distinguish those who dare to listen willingly to what is written against God, from those who, through love of him, not only do not believe these blasphemies, but do not wish even to listen to them."

⁵⁰ *Hom.*, xviii, 20: "Every man who wants to be saved must, as the Master has said, be a judge discerning the written books. For the Master said: 'Be ye good changers.' There must be changers, for the evil money is mixed with the good." Cf. *ibid.*, iii, 50.

⁵¹ *Hom.*, iii, 51: "By referring us to the scribes and doctors for the understanding of the Scriptures (Jesus) has shown that these truly knew what really was the Law."

⁵² Cf. Harnack, *Der Brief des Ptolemäus an die Flora*, pp. 16-18.

⁵³ *Adv. hæreses*, IV, xxiv-xxix; cf. Connolly, *op. cit.*, pp. lxiii et seq. Epiphanius follows Irenæus in his refutation of Ptolomy (*Hær.*, XXXIII, xi).

⁵⁴ Especially in the last ch., xxvi. Cf. Connolly, *op. cit.*, pp. lvii-lxix.

and you have been set free from the second Law, which was imposed because of idols. For in the Gospel the Lord has renewed and fulfilled and confirmed the Law, but he has abolished the second Law. He came in order to confirm the Law and abolish the second Law, and to perfect the power of human liberty, and to manifest the resurrection of the dead. . . . He made no use of sprinklings, ablutions or other rites; he offered no sacrifices or holocausts, or any of those things which had to be offered according to the second Law. And in this way he signified the abolition of the second Law, delivered you from it, and called you to liberty, saying: "Come to me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you." ⁵⁵

Anyone who still keeps to-day the ritual practices prescribed by the second Law is behaving as an idolator and is subjecting himself to "the bonds of a blind man"; the true Christians shake themselves free from it, and apply to themselves the words of David: "*Dirumpamus vincula ipsorum et proiciamus a nobis jugum ipsorum.*" ⁵⁶

If, however, we ask which are the parts of the Pentateuch which belong to the Law, the answer is not clear, "nor do I imagine that the author himself could readily have supplied it. Large portions of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy ought logically to be excluded from 'the Law.' But Law and *Deuterosis* were interwoven, it would seem, in all the books." ⁵⁷ To distinguish between these two sources there is needed a very sure intuition; this is a gift supremely necessary to a bishop:

Before all a bishop should know well how to distinguish between the Law and the second Law, and distinguish what the Law prescribes to the faithful from the shackles imposed upon the unbelievers, lest any one of his Christians mistake the shackles for the Law, weigh himself down with intolerable burdens, and become a son of perdition. ⁵⁸

This attitude, as we see, is quite different from that of the *Homilies*: the effort of the preacher is to recommend the exact observance of the ritual laws, while the preoccupation of the *Didascalía* is to dissuade from it. The answers are contradictory, but the problem is the same: the Christians who read these books regard

⁵⁵ Ch. xxvi.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Cf. Connolly, *op. cit.*, p. lxviii.

⁵⁸ Ch. iv.

the question of the Jewish rites, not as an historical problem, but as an urgent case of conscience.⁵⁹

The Office of Jesus According to the Clementines

If we try to see what, in the Clementine writings, is the function of the Law in respect of the Gospel, we find that the author does not realise the religious transformation which has been brought about in the world by the coming of Christ: if mankind had willed to conform itself to the light of reason, they would not have needed either Moses or Jesus, and it is not by believing in masters and calling them Lord that one is saved:

That is why Jesus was hidden from the Jews who took Moses for their master, and Moses is hidden from those who believe in Jesus. For, as it is the same doctrine which is taught by both, God accepts the believer in either. . . . The Jews, then, are not condemned for not knowing Jesus, since God hides him from them, provided they accomplish what Moses commands them, and do not hate him whom they know not; and the believers who come from the Gentiles are not condemned for not knowing Moses, since God veils him from them, provided they accomplish what Jesus commands them and do not hate the one whom they know not.⁶⁰

We see from this how far the redactor can go in his veneration for the Law: between Moses and Jesus he sees no difference; that a man is a disciple of one rather than the other is of little importance, provided he puts into practice what is taught, and does not hate the other master whom he knows not. This is, however, an extreme position: in the book as a whole the preaching of Christianity, and in particular of baptism, shows that the author wishes to be a Christian and to lead his readers to Christ.

Another feature in this passage is also to be noticed: the pre-dominant and almost exclusive regard for practical morality. Hence

⁵⁹ In the next century we find the same problem in Aphraates, *Hom.*, xv, *On the distinction between foods*. The solution he gives is that of the *Didascalia*: there are two categories of precepts, one kind of which Ezechiel says: "I gave them my statutes, which if a man do he shall live" (xx, 11), and another kind: "I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live" (xx, 25, 26). It was in order to deliver us from the second kind that the Lord said: "Come to me, you who labour. . . ." (Aphraates, *Patrologia Syriaca*, Vol. I, pp. 753-758).

⁶⁰ *Hom.*, viii, 5-7.

the surprising statement that if men had faithfully followed the light of reason, they would have needed neither Moses nor Jesus. And certainly in the Clementine preaching the whole stress is on the practical activity of the will, and this again is very Jewish; the doctrinal discussions have for the most part a negative character: they refute polytheism, idolatry, and astrological fatalism, but on Christian doctrine itself they throw very little light.

The True Prophet

The only important thesis set forth by the author is the theory of the True Prophet.⁶¹

The preaching of Peter at Sidon is thus summarised: "We must adore God only, believe in the one Prophet of the truth, and be baptized for the remission of sins"; in addition we must strictly observe the ritual laws.⁶²

As we see, faith is here reduced to these two articles: belief in God and in his Prophet. Who is this Prophet? For us Christians, he is Jesus. For the Jews, as has been said, he is Moses. We can go still farther back: from the origin of the human race there was a true Prophet: Adam. The story of Adam's Fall is a perversion of Scripture, and must be rejected.⁶³ Adam was "a true Prophet and knew

⁶¹ Cf. Cerfaux, *Le vrai Prophète des Clementines*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XVIII, 1928, pp. 143-163. I leave on one side another theory to which the author attaches a still greater importance, that of couples (cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-31; *ibid.*, pp. 152-155). God has separated and put in opposition all beings, "heaven and earth, day and night, light and fire, sun and moon, life and death"; in these opposing terms the less good precedes and the better follows: "The world and eternity: the present world is temporary, the future world is eternal. First ignorance, then knowledge. That is how the heads of the prophecy have been divided. As the present world is female, like a mother she gives birth to souls; the future world is male, and receives its children like a father; that is why the prophets who are in this world, being the sons of men, have a knowledge of the future world. If religious men had known this mystery they would never have strayed, and now also they would recognise that Simon, who disturbs all men, is the author of errors and of lies" (*Hom.*, ii, 15). For Simon came before Peter; hence Peter is good, and Simon bad; similarly John the Baptist is only one of the children of women; but Jesus who came after him is the Son of Man. Cf. *ibid.*, ii, 15-18; ii, 33; iii, 16, 22-28; *Recogn.*, iii, 61.

⁶² *Hom.*, vii, 8.

⁶³ *Hom.*, iii, 17 (Migne, P.G., Vol. II, 121): "I do not think that one can excuse anyone who thinks unworthy things of the Father of all, although he has been led to this by a corruption of the Scriptures, for whosoever wrongs an image, and that the image of an eternal king, sins against the King himself. . . ." xxi, 125: here the author recalls that Adam gave names to all the

all things"; he bequeathed this knowledge to his children, teaching them that they ought to serve God in all things; he thus "established for all men an eternal law." ⁶⁴

This shows how we are to understand what was said above concerning the natural law which might have sufficed for all. As mankind disregarded it, Moses and Jesus were sent to promulgate it afresh. The teaching given is the same: there is no progress from one to the other.

All this theory was like the theology of Irenæus, developed in order to refute the Marcionite heresy; but we can see the tremendous distance which separates the two doctrines. Each aims at establishing the divine origin and the holiness of the Old Testament against the negations of Marcion. But the Clementine apocrypha sees in the successive revelations of God only the repetition of one and the same message; Irenæus, on the contrary, recognises in them the stages of a progressive revelation which gradually uplifts man to God, the highest stage being marked by the Incarnation of the Word and the coming of the Holy Spirit. These great mysteries are overlooked in the Clementine books, and this constitutes their fundamental defect; Jesus is merely a messenger from God who repeats to man what Adam and Moses had told them previously; his divine sonship is neglected, and his redeeming action ignored. ⁶⁵

In this study, we have examined the religious doctrine which appears in the two Clementine works, the *Homilies* and *Recognitions*. It has introduced us to a Judeo-Christian community in the first half of the third century, but we must say at least a word about some elements conserved in these books which seem to be earlier, and to come from a more virulent Jewish Gnosticism. This is espe-

animals: "What need had he then to eat fruit in order to know good and evil, seeing he had been forbidden to eat it? They have lost their discernment who believe this, and think that an animal without reason was more powerful than the God who created all things." With this text we may compare on the one hand Tatian's theory of the damnation of Adam (*apud* Irenæus, *Adversus Hæreses*, I, xxviii, 1; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xxviii, 2-3), and on the other hand the reply of St. Irenæus to this error (*Adversus Hæreses*, III, xxiii, 8). But in the present case not only is Adam's salvation affirmed, but also his perpetual innocence, and this involves the hypothesis of the corruption of Scripture which is in fact held by that writer.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, viii, 10.

⁶⁵ In *Hom.*, xi, 20, we have a brief reference to the Master on the cross and his prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The author sees in this an example which the disciples of the Master should imitate, but nothing more.

cially the case with the solemn pledge set forth at the beginning. St. Peter writes to James:

I ask and beg you not to communicate to anyone the books of my preaching which I send to you, neither to one of our own race nor to a stranger, until you have proved him. But if after examination someone is found to be worthy, then transmit them to him as Moses did, transmitting his doctrine to the seventy who succeeded him in his chair.

In conformity with this desire, James exacts the following promise from those to whom he transmits the books:

I call to witness the heavens, the earth, and the waters, which contain all things that exist, and besides all these elements the air which penetrates all things and without which I cannot breathe, that I shall always be subject to him who gives me the books of preaching, and that I will not communicate to anyone in any way the books given to me, I will not transcribe them or give them in writing, I will not allow them to be copied, either by myself or by another, or by any other method, artifice or means; I will not treat them without care, placing them [before anyone], or making signs or communicating them in any way whatsoever. I will do this only if I find somebody worthy, as I have been judged to be myself, and then only after a still more searching test, lasting in any case six months at least; I will thereupon communicate them to this pious and good man destined for preaching, and I will do this only with the consent of my bishop.⁶⁶

The Gnostic Secret

We recognise here, more clearly than in any other text, the "secret" of the Gnostic tradition. In the rest of the book, Gnosticism is partially effaced by later additions, but nevertheless a tenacious Judeo-Christianity remains. Its persistence enables us the better to understand the reactions of the Christian Church at this time, particularly in Origen.

And already we realise what development the future may hold for this faith in God and his Prophet; to transform it into Mahometanism it will only require the prestige of a leader presenting himself as in fact *the* prophet, and who will transform this weak and apparently dying religion into a conquering sect.

⁶⁶ Migne, P.G., Vol. II, 28-29.

§ 2. MANICHÆISM¹*How the History of Manichæism has been discovered*

Down to the first years of the twentieth century, the history of early Manichæism remained very obscure.² The writings of Mani and his disciples had been numerous and very widespread, but they had been forbidden and destroyed everywhere, by Catholics, Mahometans, Buddhists and Chinese officials.³ Towards the end of the last century numerous fragments which had escaped destruction were discovered in Chinese Turkestan, where at one time Manichæism had been very strong. The Russians began a search, which was carried on by various German, English, French and Chinese missions.⁴ These were very fruitful; and all the works published during the past thirty years on Manichæism and its history depend on the discoveries made by F. K. W. Müller, Von le Coq, Stein and Pelliot. These documents were certainly of value, but they were of comparatively late date and difficult to interpret.⁵

¹ Bibliography.—The most important studies on Manichæism depend in great part on the documents discovered in Chinese Turkestan at the beginning of the twentieth century. We must mention especially: F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le Manichéisme*, fasc. 1 and 2, Brussels, 1908 and 1912; P. Alfarc, *Les Écritures manichéennes*, 2 vols., Paris, 1918; F. C. Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees*, Cambridge, 1925; G. Bardy, art. *Manichéisme*, in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, Vol. IX, cols. 1842-1895. The more recent and much more important discoveries which we mention in the text have thrown a new light on the history of Manichæism; pending the publication of these new texts (a first fascicule appeared in the summer of 1934 at Stuttgart, published by Kohlhammer), one will find a short inventory in the book of C. Schmidt, *Neue Originalquellen des Manichäismus aus Aegypten*, Stuttgart, 1933.

² Two centuries ago, Beausobre wrote in his *Histoire critique de Manichéisme et du Manichéisme*, Amsterdam, 1734, 2 vols., Vol. I, p. 217: "It is very difficult, not to say impossible, to give to-day an accurate and complete idea of the philosophical and theological system of Mani. To know with certainty the opinions of the heretics we should have to possess their confessions of faith, and books in which they themselves expound their opinions calmly and with precision. But we have at present no work by Mani himself, or of his first disciples—we have at most a few fragments conserved in the works of writers who refuted them and who, in accordance with the methods of controversialists, usually fastened on points they regarded as the least reasonable, and most capable of a bad sense."

³ This history has been told by P. Alfarc, *Les Écritures manichéennes*, Vol. I, pp. 92-110.

⁴ Cf. Alfarc, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 129-138.

⁵ Burkitt wrote: "Unfortunately the fragments consist almost entirely of small and often unintelligible scraps, and they are written either in the Soghdian language, i.e. a sort of Middle Persian intermediate between the old Persian of the inscriptions and the language used to-day, or else in a proto-Turkish" (*op.*

In the course of the year 1930, some fellahs discovered near to Medinet Mâdi in the Fayum a box containing works written on papyri, and these contained a Coptic translation of some writings by Mani himself or his early disciples.⁶

The Fayum papyri seem to have been transcribed between 350 and 400, i.e. only a century after the death of Mani in 272. Hence they give us some knowledge of Manichæism in its primitive period, which the Tourfan fragments did not enable us to reach. The study and printing of these texts has only just begun,⁷ and several years will have to pass before we know their contents exactly.⁸

Mani

We are, however, already able to establish some points which determine the general lines of the history of Mani, his preaching and his doctrine. He tells us that during the last years of the reign of Ardashir (224-241), he went on a vessel to the land of the Indians. There he "preached the hope of life, and chose there a good nucleus of disciples." When Sapor became king in 241, Mani, recalled by him, went "from the land of the Indians to the land of the Persians, and from the land of the Persians to the country of Babylon, Maisan and Chuzistan." "I appeared," he says, "before the king Sapor, who received me with much honour. He allowed me to travel in his kingdom, and to preach the word of life. I spent several years with him, following him to Persia, the land of the Parthians, and as far as Adiabene and the frontiers of the Roman Empire."⁹

This text shows that Mani sojourned in India and was active there at the beginning of his career. Historians had wondered whether Mani ever came into personal contact with Buddhism, and

cit., p. 15). The difficulty of the language is such that the scholars who have published these texts have had to warn the reader that their translation is "on many points hypothetical and provisional."

⁶ The works of Mani were for the most part written in Syriac; one work not found in these papyri, the *Shapuraken*, was written in Persian.

⁷ A first fascicule appeared in 1934: *Manichäische Handschriften der Sammlung A. Chester Beatty. I. Manichäische Homilien*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer.

⁸ The reader will find a provisional description of these books in the work of Schmidt mentioned above, and in our article, *Mani et son œuvre d'après les papyrus récemment découverts*, in *Études*, 20th Oct., 1933, pp. 129-143.

⁹ This text occurs at the beginning of the *Kephalaia*; quoted by Schmidt, *op. cit.*

the majority answered the question in the negative.¹⁰ Mani himself answers the question in a way we did not expect. This interesting piece of information is not the only one. The East and especially India exercised then a kind of fascination on men's minds. In 242, at the time when Mani, recalled by Sapor, was beginning his preaching in Persia under his protection, Plotinus was leaving Alexandria to join the army which Gordianus was leading against Sapor. He hoped, under cover of this expedition, to penetrate into Persia, perhaps even as far as India, and "to get some direct knowledge of the philosophy of the Persians and of the Indians."¹¹ As we know, the expedition ended in disaster; Plotinus escaped and returned only with great difficulty. Again, about this time there was written in Syriac, not far from the country of Mani, the *Acts of Thomas*, in which the preaching of the Apostle in India is set forth amidst a wealth of legends and Gnostic fancies. Himself more of an Oriental than Plotinus and the author of the *Acts of Thomas*, Mani, Persian born, set out to conquer India. Recalled to his own country, he remained there; he followed Sapor in his expeditions, and thus reached Adiabene on the borders of the Roman Empire, but he seems never to have crossed the frontier.

His Aim

The goal he aimed at was to found a new religion, in which all others would be fused together.

The writings, wisdom, apocalypses, parables and psalms of all the previous religions, gathered from all parts, have come together in my religion, in the wisdom which I have revealed. As one river mixes with another and forms one great stream, so also the ancient books have been united to my writings and there has thus been formed one great

¹⁰ The fragments discovered in Chinese Turkestan displayed a Buddhist influence, but this was explained by the fact that "Turkestan was a country which was half Buddhist, and wholly Buddhist countries were quite near." Burkitt, who gives this explanation (*op. cit.*, p. 98), adds: "In the original teaching of Mani, I see no sure trace of Buddhism as a formative element. Buddha is mentioned by Mani with respect, as he mentions Plato and Hermes Trismegistus. He knew very little, I believe, about these thinkers except their great names." Alfarc (*op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 211-219) allows that Mani was influenced by Buddha; he thinks it was not through personal contact in India that he knew Buddhism, but only through Gnosticism.

¹¹ Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, iii.

wisdom, to which nought can be compared that has been preached to any previous generation. No one has ever written, no one has ever revealed books like those which I have written.¹²

We recognise here that mirage of Syncretism which at that time deceived so many minds; Rome had witnessed its triumph a few years before Mani preached, in the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235). This Syncretism, which then invaded the Roman Empire, arose in Syria, and was imported from there by the Severi. When we recall this circumstance we are the less surprised by the foolish and ambitious dreams of Mani. He recognises three predecessors, who were merely forerunners of himself: Jesus, Zoroaster, and Buddha. These are his three brothers, interpreters of one and the same wisdom.¹³ All three preached, but they did not write: in this respect also, says Mani, his religion is superior to theirs:

Not one of the apostles, my brethren, who were before me, wrote their wisdom, as I have written mine; they did not represent it by pictures as I have done. My religion, from the first, surpasses the previous religions.¹⁴

Finally, Manichæism is to spread everywhere and thus it will be greater than any other religion:

One established his religion in the West, and his religion did not spread to the East; another established his religion in the East and gained nothing in the West; this is the case with all those whose names are unknown in other cities. The hope that I preach will gain the West, it will also win the East, and it will be heard in all languages and be preached in all cities. My religion is in this respect superior to all the preceding religions, for all those were established in some places and in some towns only. My religion will spread throughout all towns, and its message will reach all countries.¹⁵

Spread of Manichæism

This confident assurance is evidently based on the successful beginnings of Manichæism, and is a foreshadowing of the widespread ramifications of the sect, which will penetrate the East as far as

¹² *Kephalaia*, cliv. Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹³ *Kephalaia*, Introduction.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, cliv; Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 17. Cf. Introduction quoted *ibid.*, p. 18-19.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

China and the West as far as Africa, attracting the young Augustine because of its brilliance, and will still be strong enough to threaten Christianity in the time of St. Louis. We also see what are the weapons it chooses by preference: writing and painting. The spoken voice ceases but a book remains; and the book will win its readers not only by the message it contains but also by the beauty of its characters and often by the artistic richness of its illumination. All Manichæan manuscripts are distinguished in this respect, the Fayum papyri as well as the books of the Gobi.¹⁶

Mani and Christianity

Lastly, we notice the place found by Mani for Jesus: at first sight Jesus is not distinguished from Zoroaster or from Buddha: all three are Mani's "brothers," all three have preached the same wisdom. Nevertheless the very order in which Mani presents them is an indication of the difference in rank he assigns to each: Jesus, Zoroaster, Buddha. And this first indication is confirmed by several others which are still more significant: in one of the books we find a whole collection of hymns to Jesus; in the letters we find Mani giving himself this title: "Mani, apostle of Jesus Christ"; and this title is thus justified by Mani in his conversations with his disciples:

After the Church of the flesh was raised to the heights, then was inaugurated my own apostolate, concerning which you have questioned me. Since then, the Paraclete has been sent, the Spirit of truth, who has come to you in this last generation, in conformity with what Jesus said: "In the hour when I leave you, I will send the Paraclete, and when the Paraclete cometh he will teach the world, and will speak to you of justice."¹⁷

Then Mani says that during the reign of King Ardashir, "the living Paraclete" descended upon him, conversed with him, and revealed to him hidden mysteries. He enumerates all these mysteries, and then concludes:

Thus the Paraclete has revealed to me all that has happened and all that will happen, all that the eye sees, all that the ear hears, all that

¹⁶ The papyri are not illustrated, but the calligraphy is admirable (cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 18). On the illuminations in the Gobi MSS., cf. Burkitt, *op. cit.*, pp. v-vi.

¹⁷ Quoted by Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

the mind understands. Through him I have learnt to know all things; through him I have seen all; I have become one single body and one single spirit.

All this resembles very closely the claims of Montanus. Some seventy years before Mani, the Phrygian prophet had also applied to himself the promises of Jesus to his disciples; the Montanists, according to Eusebius, "dared to boast of Montanus as the Paraclete."¹⁸ Certainly Mani did not possess the characteristics of an ecstatic; he had "a clear head and a cool reflective mind";¹⁹ in the very chapter in which he sets forth the revelations he claims to have received from the "living Paraclete," we feel no breath of life: it reads like a catalogue. But though we do not find in Mani the ecstatic tremors of Montanus and his prophetesses, we find the same affirmation of identity with the Paraclete: "I have become (with him) one single body and one single spirit."

By reason of these pretensions, Mani like Montanus closely links himself with Christianity. The revelation he brings was that promised by Jesus; the Paraclete who speaks through him and is identified with him is the Spirit sent by Jesus. This gives a final answer to the question often discussed: Manichæism is not, as was long thought, a religion originating from paganism; it is a heresy which grew on the Christian stem like a parasitical Gnosticism. In a work which we have mentioned more than once, Professor Burkitt had the merit of enunciating clearly this thesis, as against the tendencies then prevalent. The Fayum papyri have given a decisive confirmation of it.

The Gnosticism of Mani

But, while Mani aimed at absorbing Christianity and surpassing it, he also wished to enrich it with all that could make it a living and popular religion: thus he would combine with it the religion of Zoroaster, which he had found around him in the Iranian world, and the religion of Buddha which he had seen flourishing in the Indies. He dreamt of winning the whole world to his doctrines, and did his best to utilise all the existing religious forces, and doubtless this adaptability facilitated his first foundations. But this advantage

¹⁸ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xiv; cf. *supra*, Bk. III, p. 657.

¹⁹ Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

was dearly bought: Manichæism was in this way burdened with a whole mythology and had to bear both its weight and its shame.²⁰

From this standpoint, Manichæism resembles the Gnostic systems which preceded it: its mythological cosmology recalls those of Buddha and Valentine. Mani does not seem to have had a sufficiently fertile imagination to have invented these symbols himself; he found them in the Iranian religion, and borrowed them from there, just as his predecessors had been influenced by the cosmologies of Egypt.

But of all the Gnostics, the one Mani followed most closely was Marcion. This had long been known; the texts we now have under our eyes furnish a new proof of it. The second chapter of the *Kephalaia*, entitled *The Parable of the Tree*, begins thus:

We beg thee, O Lord, reveal to us and teach us what is meant by the two trees concerning which Jesus said to his disciples: "The good tree bringeth forth good fruits; the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruits. A good tree doth not bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit."

We recognise here the Gospel text which provided a starting point for the polemics of Marcion.²¹ But for the timid dualism of his predecessor Mani substituted the radical opposition between two contrary principles, the good deity and the evil deity. That was the end to which Marcion was driven, in spite of himself, by the logic of the system; ²² Mani does not hesitate, and assimilating the Iranian mythology, he takes as the subject of his speculations and as the rule

²⁰ It will suffice if we recall here as an example the myth of the "seduction of the archontes," studied by F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le Manichéisme*, fasc. I, Brussels, 1908, pp. 54-68. Here is the conclusion of this study (p. 66): "Mani thus adopted an ancient myth of a shameless naturalism, as it was taught by the magi of the Sassanid Empire, but by a bold interpretation he tried to make it an episode in the struggle between the two eternal principles. The 'vital substance' became for him the light held captive by the Prince of Darkness. This chapter of the Manichæan cosmogony could thus seem to Orientals to be, as it were, the revelation of a truth long suspected. But beneath the veil of the symbol, the obscurity of the primitive legend is still visible, and its grossness would shock both the conscience and the taste of the Latins. The same was the case with many other Manichæan fables." A little earlier (p. 53), M. Cumont recalls that "it was above all these interminable fables concerning the sky, the stars, the sun and the moon," these innumerable stories of the making of the world, "full of a sacrilegious folly," which sickened St. Augustine with the sect into which he had strayed. Cf. Augustine, *Conf.*, V, vii, 1; V, iii, 6, *Contra Faustum*, xx, 9.

²¹ Cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, i, 2; Harnack, *Marcion*, p. 85.

²² Cf. Bk. III, p. 651.

of his asceticism the eternal struggle between the good and evil principles.

Even more than by his theology, Mani resembles Marcion by his propaganda, and by the organisation of his church. Neither had the temperament of a metaphysician, but both were successful organisers. Unwearying founders of churches, they wanted to institute these everywhere, Marcion in the whole of the Roman Empire, and Mani, still more ambitious, in the whole world, and they linked their several churches closely together. But in this respect also Mani improved on the work of his predecessor; he himself supervised the government of all his communities; he chose as assistants a group of disciples recalling the Apostolic college; among these he designated a successor to himself, Sisinnios, who would assure after his death the continuity and unity of the sect. In 272 Mani was crucified by King Bahram and Sisinnios seized the reigns of power. He was slain in his turn, but Manichæism survived him.

The Later History of Manichæism

Thanks to its strong organisation, Manichæism did not, like the heresies of Valentine and Marcion, split up almost immediately into rival sects. It spread throughout the world with great rapidity, and it absorbed Marcionism, first in the West and then in the East. It accentuated its dualism, maintained its ideal of an austere life and, by a distinction between the elect and the listeners, made its asceticism more rigid without at the same time forfeiting the sympathies of the masses. Its metaphysics were very weak, and in more than one point offended both reason and the moral sense. Yet its ambitious claims and its strong cohesion gave it a powerful and tenacious attraction over the masses. This form of Gnosticism, the latest of all, was to be the most successful and the most enduring; though persecuted everywhere it was to continue during ten centuries throughout the whole of the old world, and in the thirteenth century it would still menace Christianity in Italy and France.

THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA AFTER ORIGEN

§ 1. ST. DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA¹

Heraclas, Bishop of Alexandria

HARDLY a year had passed since Origen's condemnation when Demetrius was succeeded by Heraclas.² He occupied the see of Alexandria for sixteen years (231-247). He had been at the Catechetical School, first as a pupil, then assistant, and finally successor to Origen. When he became a bishop, he continued the measures taken against Origen by Demetrius,³ and thus he must have regarded his dismissal as opportune. If he did not support all the complaints which Demetrius had made against Origen, at least he regarded his old master of the Catechetical School as the subject of so much lively discussion that he could not be allowed to return to Alexandria without compromising the peace of the Church.

St. Dionysius: His Training

We know nothing further about the episcopate of Heraclas. His successor, St. Dionysius (247-264), was one of the great bishops of the time. In 231 he had replaced Heraclas at the head of the Catechetical School; in 247 he succeeded him in the see of Alexandria.

Like his contemporary, St. Cyprian, he seems to have been a pro-

¹ Bibliography.—C. Lett Feltoe, *Letters and other Remains of Dionysius of Alexandria*, Cambridge, 1904; J. Burel, *Denys d' Alexandrie, sa vie, son temps, ses œuvres*, Paris, 1910. The works of Dionysius have come down to us only in fragments, but these are fairly large ones. They will be found especially in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, books vi and vii, and in the *Præparatio Evangelica*, vii and xiv. The story of his controversy with Dionysius of Rome is known to us through the work of St. Athanasius, *De sententia Dionysii*, and St. Basil, *Epist.*, xli. To these we can add some exegetical fragments found in *catenæ*. All these have been diligently collected and interpreted by Feltoe, *op. cit.*

² Cf. *supra*, p. 944.

³ Origen (cf. *supra*, *ibid.*) tried to profit by the election of Heraclas to return to Alexandria; he was prevented. Subsequent legend embroidered the facts, and attributed to Heraclas the attitude of Demetrius. Cf. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 475, n. 1.

fessor of rhetoric before his conversion. We find some indications of his early training in his style, which is elegant and pure for that period, and also in references to classical authors such as Homer, Hesiod, Thucydides, Aristotle and Democritus.⁴ The pleasure he takes in these references bears witness to a Christianity less severe than that of Cyprian, and we have a more noteworthy trace of his breadth of view in this story, which he himself relates:

I myself lived in the doctrines and traditions of the heretics, and for some time soiled my soul with their impure inventions; but at least I have, as a result of my stay among them, the advantage of confounding them in myself, and of having a much greater distaste for them. A brother, who was a priest, turned me away from them; he was afraid that I might be fouled with the mire of their wickedness, for my soul might have been spoilt thereby. I knew that what he said was true, but a vision supervened which came from God and fortified me, and a voice made itself heard by me. It gave me an explicit order: "Take all that you find, for you are capable of setting to rights and examining each thing, and in your case this has been from the first the cause of your faith." I received this vision as agreeing with the apostolic word which says to the strongest: "Become prudent changers of money."⁵

Thus we find in Dionysius the custom of examining freely heretical books, as we found it in Origen. It was through this that he was led to the Faith; the heavenly vision approved and encouraged him. On the other hand, the priest's warning shows that the Church was aware of the danger of these readings, and Dionysius himself admits it; only the "strongest" may claim such freedom.

His Teaching

Dionysius was doubtless some thirty years of age and was probably already a priest when in 231 he took the place of Heraclas in the Catechetical School. It was probably during his sixteen years of teaching that he wrote his work *On Nature*, in which he refuted the atomism of Epicurus,⁶ and perhaps also his commentary on *Eclesiastes*.⁷

⁴ Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. xxiv.

⁵ *Letter to Philemon*, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, vii (cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 52).

⁶ Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-164; cf. Burel, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-21.

⁷ Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-228.

His Episcopate

These peaceful years of study were succeeded by the years of his episcopate, which were full of terrible events. Philip the Arabian had been emperor since 244; the Church had found in him, if not a declared Christian, at least a friend. But in the course of the last year of his reign (end of 248), a violent disturbance broke out at Alexandria against the Christians. Dionysius, who had been bishop for a year, narrated these matters to Fabius of Antioch and to his church. He described the martyrdom of Metras, Quinta, Apollonia, and Serapion, and the uprising of the whole city: "There was no road or street or path which was open to us by day or night; all cried out everywhere and without ceasing: 'If anyone refuses to utter blasphemies, he must be brought out and burnt.' " The Christians fled, and suffered the loss of their goods. There were no apostates, unless perhaps just one.⁸

The revolution which overthrew Philip was the occasion of a brief truce. But very soon, in October 249, the Edict of Decius was proclaimed. This was no longer an explosion of popular passion but the effort of the Roman Empire as a whole to crush the Church. At Alexandria there were many defections, especially among the "best known" Christians;⁹ but there were also many martyrs. In his letters to Fabius of Antioch and to Domitius and Didymus,¹⁰ Dionysius narrates these trials, and at the same time describes the state of his persecuted church:

In the city, some priests have hid themselves and secretly visit the brethren; these are Maximus, Dioscorus, Demetrius and Lucius. For those who were best known in the city, Faustinus and Aquila, wander about in Egypt. As for the deacons who have survived those who have died in the epidemic,¹¹ they are Faustus, Eusebius and Cheremon. It was this Eusebius whom God fortified from the beginning and prepared, so that he might carry out with courage his work among the confessors in prison and fulfil the mission, not without danger, of burying the bodies of the perfect and blessed martyrs.¹² For even to-day

⁸ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli; xlii; xliv. Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, VI, xli, 11-13. Cf. Bk. III, p. 795.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, VII, xi, 20-25; the persecution here described is that of Decius and not that of Valerian; cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

¹¹ The epidemic in question was probably that which devastated Africa under Gallus and Volusianus in 252; cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 68, n. 1. Rufinus, in place of *νόσος* read *νησος* and translated "in insula."

¹² As Eusebius notes (*ibid.*, 26) this other Eusebius became in 269 Bishop of Laodicea in Syria; Maximus was to succeed Dionysius. The history of the Decian

the governor does not fail, when any are taken before him, either to put them to a cruel death, or else to rend them by torturing them, or to make them languish in prison in chains; he forbids all access to them, and watches strictly that no one appears there. Nevertheless God provides a little solace to the persecuted ones, thanks to the courage and constancy of the brethren.¹³

The Decian Persecution

In this severity on the part of magistrates and the lengthy detentions, we recognise the Decian persecution, which raged also at Carthage and Rome. In spite of the numerous defections, there seems to have been a firmer resistance in this already ancient church of Alexandria than there was at Carthage. The community was similarly organised under the direction of priests and deacons, and the part played by the bishop was also similar. We have on this subject some valuable details in the correspondence of Dionysius, especially in his letter to Bishop Germanus, who had criticised his conduct: ¹⁴ during three days the Bishop of Alexandria had remained in his house, while sought for everywhere else; "it was not without difficulty that on the fourth day, as God commanded me to set forth and opened the way to me in a miraculous manner, we went out together, I, my servants,¹⁵ and many brethren."

In the evening, he was captured and taken to Taposiris; a wedding party learnt of this and rushed there; the soldiers took flight, and Dionysius was delivered against his will. He remained concealed in Libya, with two other brethren;¹⁶ from there he wrote to Domitius and Didymus; the information he gives concerning his church and clergy show that, like Cyprian, he continued to govern them during his exile.¹⁷

persecution at Alexandria and in Egypt is clarified by numerous *libelli* contained in the papyri; a number have been published by C. Wessely in *Patrologia Orientalis*, IV, 112 *et seq.*; XVIII, 354 *et seq.* Cf. Bk. III, p. 792, n. 2.

¹³ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xi, 24-25.

¹⁴ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xi, 2-19; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-36. The first part of this letter concerns the Decian persecution, the latter that of Valerian.

¹⁵ The meaning of the word *παῖδες* is controverted; some see here the disciples of Dionysius, still at this date head of the Catechetical School, Feltoe (*op. cit.*, p. xiv) thinks that Dionysius was a widower and that he is speaking of his own children; others again translate as we have done.

¹⁶ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xi, 23.

¹⁷ The memory of the exile of St. Dionysius remained fresh in his church. St. Peter of Alexandria recalled it in a fragment of his *Mystagogus* quoted by Routh, *Reliquiæ sacræ*, Vol. IV, p. 81; cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. xvii, n. 2.

In the course of the summer of 251, Decius was killed in the Dobrudja, where he was waging war against the Goths. Gallus, who continued the persecution of the Church, perished in his turn in May 253, and Aemilian, his successor, died three months later in August. The succession of Valerian and his son Gallienus was looked upon by the Christians as a deliverance; Dionysius refers to these hopes, which were to be so decisively destroyed by a new persecution.¹⁸ But at least for four years (253-257) the Church enjoyed peace. The Bishop of Alexandria profited by it to calm the conflicts which had arisen through the persecution. In the two grave matters of the reconciliation of apostates and the baptism of heretics, he adopted the same line as the Bishop of Rome, with the moderation which characterised his conduct in all things.

The Reconciliation of Apostates

The collapses had been numerous. As soon as peace was re-established, the confessors intervened on behalf of the apostates, but their intervention was more discreet than that of the confessors of Carthage, and it did not lead to any objection on the part of the bishop.¹⁹ Dionysius himself became their advocate, in a most moderate and at the same time most persuasive manner, in a letter to Fabius of Antioch who, according to Eusebius,²⁰ "was somewhat inclined to favour the schism" (of Novatian):

These divine martyrs who were among us, and who are now seated with Christ, share his royalty, judge with him, and pronounce sentence with him, have taken under their protection some of our fallen brethren, guilty of having offered sacrifice. These martyrs have seen their conversion and their penitence; they have decided that it could be accepted by him who wills not the death of the sinner but rather his repentance; they have received them, gathered them together, reunited them, and have shared with them their prayers and their meals. What do you advise, brethren, in this matter? What ought we to do? Shall we agree

¹⁸ In his letter to Hermammon (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, x; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 *et seq.*): "It must be noted that his prosperity lasted as long as he himself was gentle and kind towards God's people; for none of the emperors who preceded him displayed so much benevolence and favour towards them, even those who were openly said to be Christians did not receive them with such manifest favour as he did at the beginning of his reign; all his household was full of pious men; it was a church of God."

¹⁹ Cf. D'Alès, *L'Edit de Calliste*, pp. 345-349; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-64.

²⁰ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlv, 1.

with the martyrs? Shall we respect their judgment and the pardon they have granted? With regard to those who have obtained mercy, shall we ourselves act with goodness, or shall we hold that the decision taken by the martyrs is unjust, and present ourselves as censors of their judgment? Shall we lament their goodness, and upset the order they have established? ²¹

To add point to this consultation, Dionysius relates the story of the aged Serapion, in which God himself intervened in order to reconcile a dying apostate. ²²

Dionysius and Novatian

These facts are sufficient to enable us to foresee the attitude of Dionysius in regard to Novatian. He explains this still more clearly in another letter: "[If we listen to Novatian], we shall do the contrary of what was done by Christ. He was good, he went out to the mountains to seek for the lost sheep; if the sheep fled away, he called it; if he found it, he brought it back with difficulty on his shoulders. We see the sheep coming, and harshly repel it with kicks." ²³

At Antioch, rigorism was regarded with a certain sympathy by Fabius. We have seen that Dionysius, by means of a consultation, tried to bring him back to a more lenient practice. He had to intervene on the spot, being called to Antioch by Helenus of Tarsus and his colleagues, to take part in a council. ²⁴ Shortly afterwards he had the joy of writing thus to Pope Stephen: "Know that all these churches of the East and of the more distant countries, which were

²¹ *Ibid.*, VI, xlii, 5, Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

²² *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlv, 2-6, Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-21. As Dionysius says here, he had ordered that "the dying, if they request it, and especially if they asked for it beforehand, should be absolved, so that they might die in hope." But the case might arise of the restoration to health of these dying persons. In a fragment published by Pitra (Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-62) and which seems to belong to the letter to Conon mentioned by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlvi, 2), Dionysius decides the case in the sense of leniency: the divine absolution is definitive, and it would be "very absurd to charge him anew with his sins"; "but if after his recovery someone seems to need to be converted more fully, we advise him to humiliate himself of his own free will, to mortify himself, and to constrain himself; if he obeys, he will profit thereby; if he disobeys and resists, then this will be a sufficient ground for a new excommunication." A similar solution will be found in St. Cyprian, *Ad Antonianum Epist.*, lv, 13; cf. D'Alès, *Edit de Calliste*, p. 330 and n. 3.

²³ Fragment quoted by Mai from a Vatican MS. (Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 62).

²⁴ Letter to Cornelius, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlvi, 3.

formerly divided, are now united; all their heads are unanimous, and greatly rejoice at the peace which is established, contrary to what was expected." ²⁵

The Baptismal Controversy

Out of the Novatian Schism arose the Baptismal Controversy. The history of St. Cyprian has brought out the close connection between the two controversies.²⁶ In this conflict Dionysius again, showed himself anxious for the unity of the Church and for peace. The tradition of his church was more in agreement with that of Rome than with that of Carthage and Cappadocia, but he tried to persuade Pope Stephen to be more tolerant.²⁷ When St. Sixtus succeeded St. Stephen St. Dionysius returned to this matter, which had caused such great danger to unity. Since his letter to Stephen he had received more precise information; he had learnt that "on this point certain decisions existed, which had been taken by large meetings of bishops; these had decided that those converted from heresies who had previously been catechumens, should thereupon be baptised and washed anew from the stain of the old and impure leaven." Yet Stephen had threatened to excommunicate "Helenus and Firmilian, as well as all those of Cilicia and Cappadocia, and those of Galatia and of all the surrounding countries."²⁸

When Dionysius was writing this to Sixtus, the threat had already

²⁵ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 1. This refers, not as Eusebius thinks, to a cessation of persecution, but to the re-establishment of concord (cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 41). We have already mentioned (Bk. III, p. 857, n. 41) the representations made by Dionysius to Novatian himself, his failure, and the judgment he passed on the whole affair in his letter to Dionysius, then a priest and soon to become Bishop of Rome.

²⁶ Cf. Bk. III, p. 860.

²⁷ Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-59; D'Alès, art. *Baptême des hérétiques*, in *Dict. apol.*, Vol. I, col. 408. St. Jerome wrongly says in his account (*De viris illustribus*, lxxix): "Hic in Cypriani et Africanæ synodi dogma consentiens de hæreticis rebaptizandis plurimas ad diversos misit epistolas." Of the letter from Dionysius to Stephen written in 254, Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 1-2) quotes only a fragment concerning the peace restored to the Churches of the East (cf. *supra*, p. 1022). Another fragment has been conserved in Syriac and published, first by Pitra and then by Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-47.

²⁸ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, v, 3-6; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50. As Feltoe rightly points out, this phrase shows that Stephen *threatened* to excommunicate these churches, not that he did *in fact* excommunicate them. On the Eastern councils, cf. the letter from Firmilian to Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxv, 7 and 19, and the letter from Dionysius to Philemon, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, vii, 5.

passed away. In this matter the Bishop of Alexandria had done all in his power to prevent the threatened rupture; he had done his best to dissuade the Bishop of Rome from taking extreme measures; but while he was very tolerant towards the contrary tradition, he himself adhered to the Roman custom, and this was perhaps still more marked in the judgment he himself passes on baptism conferred by heretics.²⁹ We see in all this the great condescension of Dionysius, and his spirit of conciliation and peace.

The Valerian Persecution

The letters we have just mentioned were written in exile; the imperial favour had lasted only three or four years. The good dispositions of Valerian were upset under the influence of Macrienus the Magus; in 257 a first edict exiled the heads of the churches. Dionysius has himself told us of his appearance before Aemilian, the prefect of Egypt, transcribing the very text of the interrogation from the official documents.³⁰ The magistrate appears as a politician who cannot understand the obstinacy of the Christians; he does not forbid their cult, but claims to impose upon them at the same time the cult of the gods of the emperor:

"I have spoken to you of the goodness which our masters use towards you: they pardon you if you will be converted to that which is in harmony with nature, and adore the saving gods of the Empire, and abandon all that is contrary to nature. What do you say to this? I expect you not to be ungrateful in view of the benevolence of our princes, since they exhort you to what is best." Dionysius replied: "All do not adore all the gods, but each person adores those whom he regards as such. We adore the one God who has created all beings, and who has placed the Empire in the hands of the most pious Augusti, Valerian and Gallienus; it is he whom we venerate and adore, and we pray to him constantly for their kingdom, that it may remain unshakable." Aemilian, exercising the office of governor, said: "Who then prevents you from adoring him, if he is God, together with the gods who are such by nature? For you are commanded to adore the gods, and the gods whom all know." Dionysius replied: "We do not adore any other god."

²⁹ If we are to believe St. Basil, *Epist.*, ii, 188, Dionysius would even seem to have allowed the validity of Montanist baptism. Cf. Bk. III, p. 86c, n. 50.

³⁰ A bishop named Germanus had accused Dionysius of fleeing from the persecution; the details given above are derived from the defence put forward by Dionysius.

Aemilian, exercising the office of governor, said: "I see that you are all ungrateful and insensible towards the clemency of our Augusti; accordingly, you will not remain in this city, but you will be sent into the region of Libya to a place called Kephro, for I have chosen that place by order of our Augusti. It will be absolutely forbidden to you and all others, to hold meetings or to enter what are called cemeteries. If it is discovered that anyone is not to be found in the place which I have chosen for you, or is in a meeting, he will put himself in peril, and the fitting punishment will not fail. Withdraw yourselves, therefore, to the place ordained for you."³¹

When they arrived at Kephro, the martyrs were met with showers of stones thrown by the pagan population, but very soon some of these were converted. Thereupon the governor sent the Christians further into Libya, "assigning to each one as his residence a hamlet among those of the country. As for myself," adds Dionysius, "he started me off on the road, as the one who should first be dealt with. For he had obviously arranged and prepared things in such a way that, when he desired to take us, he would have us all within easy reach."

But matters went no further; for reasons which we do not know, the edict of 258, which led to Cyprian's martyrdom, did not affect Dionysius. Toward the end of 259 or the first months of 260, Valerian was taken prisoner by Sapor; his son Gallienus, possibly under the influence of his wife Salonina, published an edict of toleration.³²

This marked the end of the persecution, but not the end of trials. Dionysius, returning to Alexandria, found the city divided into two camps, one holding for Gallienus, and the other for Macrienus and his sons: "It would be easier for a person, not only to go beyond the boundaries of the province, but even to go from East to West, than to arrive at Alexandria, starting from Alexandria itself. The vast and trackless desert in which Israel wandered for two generations was less wide and easier to traverse than the main street of the city." The harbour, filled with blood, reminded him of the Red Sea. "And then people are surprised, and ask whence come the pests, maladies and plagues of all kinds, and why the huge city no longer contains as many inhabitants, including children who cannot yet talk and

³¹ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xi, 7-11; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

³² This edict assured to Christians not only their personal security but also the use of places of worship. Cf. Bk. III, p. 806.

old people who are at the extreme limits of age, as it once contained of strong men alone.”³³ The plague had indeed broken out; its terrible ravages are described by Dionysius, as well as the charity of clergy and faithful, contrasting with the fear and selfishness of the pagans.³⁴

Millenarianism

In the course of his deportation to Libya, Dionysius was led to combat Millenarianism, and to discuss the authenticity of the *Apocalypse*.³⁵ Nepos, an Egyptian bishop,³⁶ had defended Millenarianism in a work entitled *Refutation of the Allegorists*; Dionysius answered him in two books *On the Promises*. He praised Nepos, his faith, his love for the Bible and his psalmody, but he protested that he himself loved truth more. The two bishops met at Arsinoe; the discussion lasted three days, characterised by wisdom, charity and peace; it resulted in the adhesion of Coracion, the leader of the Millenarians, to the doctrine maintained by Dionysius.

The fragments which remain to us of this work of Dionysius enable us to determine the position he defended on some important points. He mentioned the interpretation given by St. Irenæus and refuted it.³⁷ The main question concerned the *Apocalypse*. Dionysius discussed this in the course of his second book: “Some of those who have preceded us have completely rejected and repulsed this book; they have refuted it chapter by chapter, declaring that it is unintelligible and incoherent and carries a false title.”³⁸ . . . For my part, I would not be so bold as to reject this book, seeing that a

³³ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxi, 3-9.

³⁴ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxii.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, VII, xxiv-xxv.

³⁶ Probably Bishop of Arsinoe, where the discussion took place. Cf. *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxiv, 6.

³⁷ St. Jerome, *Præf. in libr. XVIII in Is.* Cf. Gry, *Le Millénarisme*, p. 101, n. 1.

³⁸ Gry notes (*op. cit.*, p. 101, n. 1). “Dionysius doubtless had in mind the priest Caius, but he speaks of many, and indeed of some who had preceded him; perhaps at Alexandria, under the influence of Origen, certainly under that of Greek philosophy, some had gone so far as to hold such radical views.” Since Gry wrote his work, there have appeared the *Scholía* of Origen on the *Apocalypse*, published by C. Diobouniotis and A. Harnack (1911). These *Scholía*, if they are accepted as authentic, establish Origen’s acceptance of the canonical character of the *Apocalypse*. Probably therefore the position of Origen on this matter was the same as that of Dionysius: he recognised the authority of the book, but rejected the Millenarian interpretation of it.

great number of brethren regard it with favour; I certainly find that its thought goes beyond my powers of conception, but I conjecture that there is in each passage a hidden and very admirable sense."³⁹ But, while admitting the authority of this sacred book, Dionysius refused to regard it as a work of the apostle John. Comparing the *Apocalypse* to the fourth Gospel, he endeavoured to show that they cannot be from the same author, for they reveal two writers, differing in character, idea and expression, style and syntax. The points thus brought out are not really decisive, and it is possible to give them a different explanation from that advanced by Dionysius;⁴⁰ but at least we must recognise that the professor of the Catechetical School has here given us a critical study which calls for attention.⁴¹

*The Controversy on the Trinity*⁴²

Towards the end of his life, Dionysius had to intervene in a more serious controversy, and in this case his intervention was less fortunate. The Pentapolis district of Libya, the churches of which were attached to the church of Alexandria, was at that time threatened and even invaded by the Sabellian heresy.⁴³ Dionysius's long exile had prevented him from following the progress of this propaganda. But in 257 he realised the immediate danger, and wrote thus to Sixtus, Bishop of Rome:

On the matter of the doctrine now taught at Ptolemais in the Pentapolis, a wicked doctrine which contains a great blasphemy against the Father almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, also great unbelief in respect of the one Son, the first born of all creation, the incarnate Word, and likewise ignorance concerning the Holy Spirit, I have received from the two sides documents and brethren who have

³⁹ Ed. Feltoe, pp. 114-116.

⁴⁰ A very careful discussion of the matter will be found in P. Allo, *Apocalypse*, pp. cxviii and cxcix-cxxii.

⁴¹ Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 108, and Westcott, *Hist. of N. T. Canon*, p. 362, n. 3, quoted by Feltoe, *ibid.*

⁴² Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-198; Athanasius, *De sententia Dionysii; De synodis*, xliii; St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, xxix, lxxii; *Epist.*, 1, 9. Recent historians of dogma have all dealt with, or at least mentioned, this controversy; see especially Tixeront, *Théologie anténicéenne*, pp. 408-413; Hamack, *Dogmengeschichte*, I, pp. 767-773; Bethune-Baker, *Early History of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 113-118; Hagemann, *Römische Kirche*, pp. 411-453.

⁴³ Sabellius was born in the Pentapolis; according to Athanasius (*De sent. Dion.*, v) his heresy was so widespread there in the time of Dionysius that some churches no longer dared to preach the Son of God.

discussed things with me; I have drawn up some letters as I was able, with God's help, in the form of a methodical exposition; I have sent you copies of these.⁴⁴

These first efforts encountered resistance on the part of the heretics; Dionysius tried again.⁴⁵ New letters from him were read and discussed, not only in the Pentapolis but at Alexandria; several of those who read them considered that, in his anxiety to defend the distinction between the divine Persons, he had lost sight of the unity of their substance, and they denounced him to the Bishop of Rome.

The letter which formed the subject of the accusation had been written to Euphranor and Ammonius. The Alexandrians who sent it to Rome said that it contained grave errors. According to them, Dionysius separated the Son from the Father, denied his eternity and consubstantiality with the Father, and represented him as a creature and not the proper Son of God.⁴⁶

The Synod of Rome and the Letter to the Pope

At Rome the matter was regarded as sufficiently serious to warrant the calling of a Council. The bishops who took part "were indignant, and the Bishop of Rome set forth the opinion of all when

⁴⁴ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, vi; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

⁴⁵ Athanasius thus sets forth the succession of events: "Dionysius wrote to the authors of this heresy, advising them to abandon it; as they did not do so but became bolder in their impiety, he was compelled to reply to their impudence by the letter in question" (*De sententia Dionysii*, v). Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxvi, 1) gives as the recipients of the letters Ammonius Bishop of Berenice, Telesphorus, Euphranor and Euporos, doubtless all four bishops. If we add to them Basilides, mentioned *ibid.*, VII, xxvi, 3, we are led to the conclusion that each of the cities of the Pentapolis had its own bishop at that time (cf. Duchesne, *Hist. anc. de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 483).

⁴⁶ These complaints are set forth in Athanasius (*De sent. Dionysii*, iv-xviii); cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167. We notice this text especially, which the Arians will later on exploit. "[The Son of God] is a creature, and has been made; he is not, by nature, the proper [Son of God], but he is other than the Father in essence; he is related to him in the same way that the vine is to the vinegrower, or the boat to the builder, for since he is a creature, he was not before he was made" (Athanasius, *ibid.*, iv). Athanasius admits the correctness of the citation, but he applies it to the Word as incarnate, this explanation is not confirmed by the text of Dionysius himself. As to those who had accused Dionysius, Athanasius reproaches, not their bad faith, but their precipitation: "they had a sound faith, but they did not question Dionysius to learn from him the sense of his letter" (*ibid.*, xiii).

writing to his namesake," Dionysius of Alexandria.⁴⁷ To bring the bishop to the right attitude, the Pope drew up two letters. One, which has not come down to us, was addressed personally to Dionysius, and invited him to explain himself; the other was addressed to the church of Alexandria; it did not name Dionysius, but it condemned his doctrine.

This document is the most important testimony we have concerning the ante-Nicene doctrine on the dogma of the Trinity.⁴⁸ According to the analysis of the Pope's letter given by St. Athanasius,⁴⁹ this portion was preceded by another, in which Dionysius of Rome condemned Sabellianism. Then it continued as follows:

Next I must address myself to those who divide, separate and suppress the most sacred dogma of the Church of God, the Monarchy, teaching three powers or separate hypostases, and three divinities. For I have learnt that some of those who are catechists and masters among you, and who are, so to speak, diametrically opposed to the opinion of Sabellius, are introducing this other opinion. His blasphemy consists in saying that the Son is the Father, and vice versa; but they preach that there are in a manner three Gods, dividing the holy unity into three hypostases foreign to each other and entirely separate. But it must needs be that the divine Word be united to the God of the universe, and the Holy Spirit must have in God his abode and habitation. And it is in every way necessary that the Holy Trinity be summed up and brought back to one alone as to its summit—in other words, to the Almighty God of the universe. For to cut up and divide the Monarchy into three principles is the teaching of the insensate Marcion; it is a diabolical doctrine, and not that of those who are truly disciples of Christ and who delight in the teachings of the Saviour. For these know well the Trinity preached by the divine Scripture, but [they know that] neither the Old nor the New Testament preaches three gods. We must similarly reprove those who say that the Son is a work, or that the Lord has been made, as if he were one of the things made, whereas the divine oracles attribute to him a generation peculiar to him and fitting for him, not a creation or production. It is therefore a blasphemy, and not an ordinary but a very great one, to say that the Lord is in some way the work of hands; for if he became Son, there was a time when he was not. But he always was, for he is in the Father, as he himself says, and the Son is Logos and Wisdom and Power—for the divine Scriptures, as you know, say that

⁴⁷ Athanasius, *De Synodis*, xliii and xlv.

⁴⁸ This fragment has been inserted by St. Athanasius in his *De Decretis Nicænæ Synodi*, xxvi. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-182.

⁴⁹ *De sententia Dionysii*, xiii.

the Christ is all these—and these are the powers of God. If, then, the Son was produced, there was a time when these were not; there was therefore a moment when God was without these [powers], which is the height of absurdity. And why discuss all this at greater length with you, with men led by the Spirit of God, who see clearly to what absurdities one is led if one says that the Son is a work? I think that those who have taught this opinion have not reflected on it, and that is why they have been wholly deceived, giving an absurd interpretation to the divine and prophetic word: "The Lord has created me, the beginning of his ways." For the phrase "has created me" has, as you know, more than one meaning, and here we must understand "has created me" in the sense of "has set me over" the works produced by him and produced by means of the Son himself. And here we must not understand "has created me" in the sense of "has made me," for there is a difference between "to make" and "to create." "Is he not himself thy Father, who has possessed thee, made thee, and created thee?" says Moses in Deuteronomy, in his great Canticle. We might say to these people: O foolish men: is he then a creature, the first born of all creation, he who was engendered from the bosom [of God] before the morning light, he who, being wisdom, has said: "Before all the hills he engenders me"? Very often in the divine oracles we find that the Son is said to be generated, but not produced. And these texts clearly show that they lie who dare to say that the divine and ineffable generation of the Lord is a production.

Hence, we must not divide the wonderful and divine unity into three divinities, nor lower by [the idea of] production the dignity and excellent greatness of the Lord, but we must believe in God the Father almighty, and in Christ Jesus his Son, and in the Holy Spirit, and [believe that] the Word is united to the God of the universe. For he says: "My Father and I are one single thing"; and "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me." It is thus that we safeguard the divine Trinity, and at the same time the holy preaching of the Monarchy.

The importance of this document is obvious. It shows us in the first place the teaching authority of the Church exercised in a sovereign manner by the Bishop of Rome. The doctrine which is condemned and censured had been upheld by one of the most venerated bishops in the whole Church; the see of Alexandria, and the personal prestige of Dionysius conferred upon the incriminated letter a high authority. Yet it is judged and condemned, and no one thinks of appealing against this judgment.

Dionysius is not the only one affected: together with him, the Roman condemnation is aimed at several of those "who among you [at Alexandria] are catechists and masters of divine doctrine."

Clearly the Pope has in mind the Catechetical School with its Origenist tradition. Doubtless this school was the subject of discussion at Alexandria itself; the denunciation pronounced at Rome shows this sufficiently, and Dionysius of Rome is careful to note that, among the catechists, only a certain number hold the theses here in question. But once again, the bishop is not alone responsible for this teaching, and doubtless that is the explanation of the procedure adopted, namely, the convocation of a Council at Rome, followed by this grave and public letter.

These historical indications are valuable; the doctrinal definition which the text formulates is of still greater importance. What it affirms in the first place is the divine unity. From the time of Victor, Zephyrinus, and Callistus, the defence of this dogma had been the especial care of the bishops of Rome. Dionysius is truly the heir of their faith; to safeguard this unity, he has recourse to the doctrine of Irenæus on "recapitulation":⁵⁰ "It is necessary that the divine Word be united to the God of all things; it is necessary that the Holy Spirit return to live and dwell in God; finally, it is absolutely necessary that the divine Trinity be 'recapitulated' and gathered together into one as into one summit, that is, in the God of all things, the Almighty." In this process of the divine life, which flows out of the Father and which thus returns to him, we recognise the relations which unite the three Persons, and which later on will be explained by the doctrine of circumincession.⁵¹

The theology of God the Son was especially involved in the controversy. The Bishop of Rome applies himself to defend the generation of the Son and his eternity; he develops above all the argument based on the relations between the Son and the Father; the Son is the perfection of the Father, and consequently is, like him, eternal. This argument will be one of the favourite weapons used by the defenders of Nicæa against the Arian heresy in the next century.⁵²

It has been observed that the reasoning of the Bishop of Rome makes no mention of the subtle distinctions of the Alexandrians on the twofold state of the Word.⁵³ Dionysius of Rome was not ignorant

⁵⁰ Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 589.

⁵¹ Cf. Th. de Regnon, *Études de théologie positive*, Vol. I, p. 405.

⁵² Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 497 et seq.

⁵³ The observation has been made by Feltoe (*op. cit.*, p. 169, n. 1); it is made again in a harsher form by Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 772. Cf. *Revue d'hist. ecclés.*, Vol. XX, 1924, p. 9, n. 1.

of these speculations; he had a wide culture, to which his name-sake of Alexandria bore witness in the letter which he sent him before his elevation to the see of Rome.⁵⁴ But here it is not the scholar or theologian who speaks, but the Pope; his function is not to pursue his own personal speculations, but to defend the doctrine entrusted to him.

The letter of Dionysius of Alexandria, in spite of its imprudences or its unfortunate expressions, was certainly far removed from the heresy of Arius; but the letter of Dionysius of Rome already has the Nicæan accent, for it manifests the same care for the divine unity, and the same sovereign and categorical decision in the definition of the Faith. This insurmountable barrier, against which sixty years later Arianism will hurl itself in vain, already arrests an overbold theology.

Refutation and Apology

Dionysius of Alexandria wrote a work in four books, *Refutation and Apology*,⁵⁵ in order to defend and explain his ideas. Only some fragments of it have come down to us.⁵⁶

Though they cannot take the place of the lost work, these fragments at least enable us to understand the ideas of the Bishop of Alexandria in their main points. The method of defence adopted by St. Athanasius, who explained the incriminated passages by applying them to the Incarnate Word, has no support in Dionysius himself.⁵⁷ Hence we must understand them of the divine nature of the Word, but give them the benefit of the explanations provided. These are very satisfactory on the question of the eternity of the Word, which is not only affirmed,⁵⁸ but proved very effectively from the necessary relation between the Father and his various perfections.⁵⁹ This argument was, as we have seen, used by

⁵⁴ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, viii; cf. St. Basil, *Epist.*, ii, 70.

⁵⁵ From the fourth fragment we may infer that Dionysius had not before him the text of the incriminated letter; it is therefore very probable that he was not then at Alexandria but in exile. The pontificate of Dionysius of Rome ran from 22nd July 259 to 26th Dec. 268; the edict of toleration was issued by Gallienus at the end of 260; the controversy must therefore belong to the last months of 259 or 260.

⁵⁶ Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-198.

⁵⁷ Cf. Hagemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 427-428; Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 194, n. 11.

⁵⁸ *Fragm.*, iii.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, iii, vii, viii.

the Pope, and will be utilised also by the Nicene fathers; for the rest, it is in line with Origen's theology. On the question of the generation of the Son, the explanations provided are sometimes not very satisfactory,⁶⁰ and Dionysius himself admits that two of his former comparisons were unsuitable.⁶¹ His new affirmations are categorical: for him, as for the other ante-Nicene writers, the Word has truly come forth from the Father. He shows this by the examples of light (iii, xii), a spring (iv, v), human generation (iv, vii, viii), and the human word (xiii). The question of the consubstantiality remains obscure. Dionysius explains that he has not employed the word "consubstantial," because he had not found it in Scripture (iv). He can hardly be blamed for that: the term was not obligatory at that time, and the Pope himself had not made use of it. But the Bishop of Alexandria seems to have an imperfect comprehension of what is implied by consubstantiality, and to confuse it with homogeneity.⁶² Thus, in spite of all his protestations, which are obviously sincere, the door remains open, not indeed to Arianism, but to Tritheism.

Lastly, we notice in Dionysius, as in other theologians prior to Nicæa,⁶³ a dangerous tendency to refer to the external operations of God the relations which constitute the Trinity. To explain the generation of the Word, he studies the cosmological problem of the origin of the world, without noticing that thereby he compromises the eternity of the Word and the necessity of his generation: ⁶⁴ God might not have created the world, but he could not abstain from generating his Son.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, viii, ix.

⁶¹ The examples of the plant and its cultivator, the boat and its builder: *Fragm.*, iv.

⁶² In *Fragment*, iv, he thus defends his idea: "I gave as an illustration human generation, which manifestly produces a term of the same nature, I said there was absolutely no other difference between parents and their children except that the former were not the latter, for otherwise there could not be either parents or children." This comparison suggests that the three Persons belong to the same (divine) race, but it does not lead to their consubstantiality. The Christian dogma as Dionysius of Rome expounds it implies, not a specific unity realised in three substances, as may be found here below in a father and his children, but the numerical unity of one single nature. Cf. Feltoe, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

⁶³ Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 563 and n. 41.

⁶⁴ Cf. Eusebius, *Præp. evang.*, VII, xix (Feltoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-185).

⁶⁵ This tendency in Alexandrian theology has been well pointed out by Hagemann (*op. cit.*, p. 441). After describing the double movement in the divine life of flux and reflux, as set forth by Dionysius of Rome, he continues: "The Alexandrian theology considered practically only one aspect of these

But in spite of the obscurities which still cover the thought of Dionysius of Alexandria on a few points, it is clear that the letter he received from the Bishop of Rome and the reply he made to it did in great part dissipate the objections. St. Athanasius will rightly point out that these two documents are equally opposed to Arianism: the Roman letter condemns it and the Alexandrian letter repudiates it.⁶⁶ But at the same time it must be allowed that the attitude of the Bishop of Alexandria opened the way to denunciations by his diocesans and to remonstrances from Rome. The cause was, as St. Basil suggested later on, "not the perversity of his mind," but his great desire to oppose Sabellius:

I like to compare him to a horticulturist, who, setting out to straighten a twisted young tree, makes an exaggerated effort in the other direction and bends the branch. . . . That is more or less what we see to have happened to this man. He opposed the impiety of the Libyan with all his powers, and he did not perceive that he was allowing his zeal to carry him away into the opposite error. He should have been content to show that the Father and the Son are not personally identical; he would thus have removed the blasphemy. But in order to triumph clearly and abundantly, he taught not only the distinction of the hypostases, but also a difference in essence, subjection in power, and diversity of glory. In this way it came about that he exchanged one evil for another, and did not attain to correctness of doctrine.⁶⁷

In this controversy, which must have been painful to the aged bishop, we can but admire the sincerity of his faith, and the courageous humility of his efforts, but we also realise the hesitations in his theology. Origen had been banished from Alexandria, but his influence, though rejected by some minds, was still strong on many others, and Dionysius himself could not free himself entirely from it. True, he and his were far removed from Arianism, but their teaching had not the firmness of the Roman doctrine. It had not a clear idea of consubstantiality, which will be the subject

relations: the productive force of the Father and the current of activity which flows therefrom; by closely combining cosmology with the divine processions, it was prevented from considering closely the divine unity in itself apart from the world, and this consideration comes only after the end of this period of the universe." True, Dionysius of Alexandria adhered to the Pope's doctrine on the "recapitulation," but this was by way of an acceptance rather than as a spontaneous and logical inference from his own thought.

⁶⁶ *De sententia Dionysii*, xiii.

⁶⁷ *Epist.*, 1. 9.

of the great conflict sixty years later. Then the danger of these hesitations and obscurities will be realised; the Church will avoid them by the luminous firmness of the Nicene definitions, constituting a faithful echo of the dogmatic letter of Dionysius of Rome.

Death of Dionysius of Alexandria

In 264, Dionysius of Alexandria was called to Antioch to take part in the Council which was to judge Paul of Samosata. He excused himself on account of his great age and his bad health;⁶⁸ shortly afterwards he died. He was succeeded in the see of Alexandria by the priest Maximus, who had been distinguished by his devotion during the Decian persecution.⁶⁹

§ 2. ST. GREGORY THAUMATURGUS¹

Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus

We have already encountered Gregory Thaumaturgus as a disciple of Origen at Cæsarea in Palestine. He was then called Theodore. He belonged to one of the most noble families of Pontus. He and his brother set out for Beirut to study law there, and they both went on to Cæsarea, where their brother-in-law was assessor to the Governor. There they met Origen, to whom Firmilian may have recommended them; they remained with him five years (233-238). Shortly after his return to his own country, Gregory was consecrated bishop by Phaidimos, Bishop of Amasia, and sent by him to Neocæsarea.² His brother Athenodorus also received the episcopal office, and worked at his side in that district, which had hitherto been almost entirely pagan. That was about 243, when the two brothers were some thirty years of age.

We have no detailed information on their lives, and know only

⁶⁸ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxvii, 2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, VII, xi, 25.

¹ Bibliography.—Editions: Migne, *P.G.*, Vol. X, 963-1232; *Discourse on Thanksgiving* (i.e. Panegyric on Origen), ed. Koetschau, Freiburg, 1894; *Quæ syriace et armenice supersunt fragmenta*, in Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, Vol. IV, pp. 81-169; transl. pp. 345-412.

Studies: Ryssel, *Gregor der Wunderthäter*, Leipzig, 1880; Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, Vol. II, pp. 272-289; Puech, *Histoire de la Littérature grecque chrétienne*, Vol. II, pp. 490-509.

² Now Niksar, not far away from Tokat.

the main outlines of them. But what we notice in the first place is the remarkable activity of St. Gregory. We learn this above all from the testimonies of St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Basil.³ As Duchesne has written,⁴ the panegyric of the saint "by St. Gregory of Nyssa and the few details given by St. Basil represent traditions gathered in Pontus about a century after the saint's death, either by the writers themselves, or else by Macrina their grandmother, who had lived in Pontus a short time after Gregory's death, and had perhaps herself seen him." Concluding his panegyric, Gregory of Nyssa writes thus: "Whosoever shall read this discourse will be surprised at the conversion *en masse* of this whole people, who passed from the folly of the Gentiles to the knowledge of the truth. But let no one refuse to believe in it; rather, let him consider how this change from error to the truth came about." St. Basil says in his turn: "What place are we to give to Gregory the Great and to his words? Must we not put him among the apostles and prophets, this man who was led by the same Spirit as they were, who walked in the footsteps of the saints throughout his life, and who during all his lifetime was a model of evangelical living? . . . He had received such a grace of speech to lead the Gentiles to accept obedience to the faith that, though at his arrival he found only seventeen Christians, he taught and converted to God the whole populace of the towns and the country." After recalling his miracles and prophecies, St. Basil adds: "To-day still he is held in veneration in this country; his memory is ever fresh and living in these churches; time has not been able to make it fade. They have desired to add nothing, whether a custom or a word, or a mystic rite, to those he had left to the Church. For this reason the ceremonies in use in this country have an incomplete air, because of their archaic character. For those who succeeded him in the government of the churches have not suffered anything to be added to what he established."⁵

The Methods of his Apostolate

The fruits of this work of evangelisation are seen in the testimony of Basil and his brother, and these fruits are wonderful. We would

³ Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Gregorii*, Migne, P.G., Vol. XLVI, 893-957; Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, xxix, 74; *Epistolæ*, xxviii, 1, 2; cciv, 2; ccvii, 4; ccx, 3, 5.

⁴ *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 444, n. 1.

⁵ *De Spiritu Sancto*, xxix, 74.

like to know, not only the miracles of the Thaumaturge, but also the methods of his apostolate. Unfortunately only a few of its features have come down to us, but they are worthy of note. Gregory of Nyssa mentions particularly the festivals instituted in honour of the martyrs after the Decian persecution:

Here again is an indication of the great wisdom of this man: he had to form a whole generation *en masse* to a new life. As a driver who knows how to lead nature, he held them firmly by the bridle of the faith and knowledge of God, but at the same time he allowed them to have, under the yoke of the faith, a certain amount of joy and freedom. He had observed that this childlike and uncultivated people were still attached by the pleasures of the senses, to the cult of idols; he wished to make sure above all of essentials, and to turn them away from vain superstitions and to lead them to God; he therefore allowed them to celebrate the memory of the martyrs in joy and gladness; he realised that in time their life would become spontaneously more serious and more regular, inasmuch as the Faith itself would lead them to this. And in fact that is what has happened in the case of the majority: their joy has changed; leaving the pleasures of the body, they have passed to those of the spirit.⁶

This great apostolic work was carried on by St. Gregory in the midst of very great calamities. He had been a bishop for scarcely seven or eight years when the Decian persecution broke out. Like St. Cyprian and St. Dionysius of Alexandria, he had the wisdom to conceal himself: was he not the indispensable support of his church? But his flock, consisting almost entirely of neophytes, as is shown by the passage we have just read, was struck down. The persecution had lasted scarcely a year when Decius perished in the Dobrudja (summer of 251). His army was defeated and dispersed, and the flood of barbarians, Goths and others, spread over the Empire. Pontus was invaded and devastated. When the barbarians had passed, the bishop undertook the task of reviving the decimated Christian communities. From all quarters there arose cases of conscience which had to be solved. These form the subject of the Canonical Letter addressed by Gregory to a bishop whose name is not given.⁷

⁶ *Discourse on the Life of St. Gregory*. Cf. Thomassin, *Traité des fêtes de l'Eglise*, 1683, pp. 503-504; Delehay, *Les légendes hagiographiques*, p. 202.

⁷ This Letter is regarded by the Greek Church as having a canonical value. It is edited by Routh, *Reliquiæ sacræ*, Vol. III, pp. 253-283, and in Migne, P.G., Vol. X, 1020-1048, with the notes of the canonists Balsamon and Zonaras.

The Canonical Letter

Certain Christians are disturbed, fearing that they have eaten things offered to idols; Gregory reassures them. He comforts the virgins who have been outraged against their will, but he is severe towards those who had sinned voluntarily before the invasion. Some had dared to retain by force in their service captives taken by the barbarians: "Send," he says, "men into the country, lest lightning strike these criminals." Others, forgetting that they were inhabitants of Pontus and also Christians, had become the allies of the barbarians, showing them the way and indicating houses to be pillaged; these must be excommunicated until a Council has been held to decide what the saints and above all the Holy Spirit decree in their regard. Robbers, if they have been convicted justly, must be excommunicated; if they have accused themselves, they are to be admitted to penance. In the final canon, the bishop forbids those who conduct themselves well to ask for any reward, for any reason whatsoever, "whether for giving information, or for taking care of anything, or for finding anything."

The Creed

These various features show how Gregory carried out the education of his neophytes, endeavouring to make of them worthy inhabitants of Pontus and Christians. A still more valuable document is his Creed. This has been conserved for us by St. Gregory of Nyssa, who gives the following account of its origin. Gregory had just been consecrated bishop; he was young, appalled at his task, anxious above all about the danger arising from heresies. The Mother of the Lord appeared to him, with St. John the Evangelist, whom she told to expound the faith to Gregory. St. John willingly obeyed, and this divine "mystagogy" is the Creed of Gregory:⁸

⁸ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *op. cit.*, col. 912. This apparition of the Blessed Virgin is the first to be mentioned in history. It cannot surprise us, if we remember that contemporaries such as St. Cyprian and St. Dionysius mention visions of their own. We must also point out that the special veneration shown here to Our Lady and St. John is not surprising in a disciple of Origen: cf. Origen, *In Joann.*, I, iv, 23: "We dare to say that, if the Gospels are the first-fruits of all the Scriptures, the *Gospel of John* is the first-fruit of the Gospels, and no one can grasp its meaning if he has not rested on the bosom of Jesus and received from Jesus Mary to become his own mother also."

One only God, Father of the living Logos, of the subsistent Wisdom, of the Power, of the eternal Impress, who has perfectly generated a perfect [Son], Father of the only begotten Son.

One only Lord, the sole from the Sole, God of God, impress and image of the Divinity, active Logos, Wisdom which upholds the whole of the Universe, and Power which has made the whole creation, true Son of the true Father, invisible from the invisible, and incorruptible from the incorruptible, immortal from the immortal, and eternal from the eternal.

And one only holy Spirit, having existence from God, and appearing through the Son, image of the Son, perfect from the perfect, the life principle of the living, holiness which confers sanctification, in whom is manifested God the Father, who is above all and in all, and God the Son who is everywhere.

A perfect Trinity, neither divided nor dissipated in glory, eternity, and the kingdom. There is therefore in the Trinity nothing created, nothing servile, nothing introduced from without as not having at first existed and then coming [into existence]. For neither has the Son ever been lacking to the Father, nor the Spirit to the Son, but the same Trinity has ever remained without transformation or change.⁹

This Creed, which is certainly authentic,¹⁰ is a noteworthy one. If we consider its form, we see that it is exclusively Trinitarian,¹¹ and that in style it is more philosophical than Scriptural.¹² But what is much more important is its doctrinal bearing. It is above all

⁹ In this Creed, cf. L. Froidevaux, *Le symbole de saint Grégoire la Thaumaturge*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XIX, 1929, pp. 193-247. The authenticity of this Creed has been established by Caspari (*Alte und neue Quellen*, pp. 25-64). Kattenbusch (*Das Apostolische Symbol*, Vol. I, p. 339) wholly accepts this conclusion, so also Hahn and Harnack (*Bibliothek der Symbole*, p. 254, n.). Cf. Loofs, *Leitfaden*, pp. 221-222, who, comparing this theology with that of Dionysius, sees in Gregory the right wing, and in Dionysius the left wing of the school of Origen.

¹⁰ Cf. the preceding note. To the internal arguments which have been developed at length by Caspari, and which are very strong, we must add the testimony of St. Basil, quoted above, as to the attachment of the church of Neocæsarea to everything which Gregory had established; this jealous fidelity, which gave an archaic colour to the liturgy of this church, guarantees the authenticity and integrity of the document quoted by Gregory of Nyssa.

¹¹ We note especially the absence of any Christology. This fact will be better understood if we accept the theory that the formula of the baptismal Creed was originally Trinitarian, and that the Christological formula was added later. Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 473, n. 9.

¹² This feature is characteristic of St. Gregory; we find it again in the Treatise on the Divine Impassibility. Cf. Loofs, *Leitfaden*, p. 223, n. 5; Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 781, 794.

an affirmation of the divine unity. Not only is this unity formulated, against Marcion, as in the majority of creeds at this epoch: "one only God . . . one only Lord . . . one only Spirit"; but, after these three sections devoted to the three divine Persons, a last article has as its subject the Trinity itself: in the Trinity there is no transformation, no change, nothing created, nothing adventitious, nothing which comes into existence after not existing; "neither the Son has ever been lacking to the Father, nor the Spirit to the Son."

In the doctrinal letter of Pope St. Dionysius, a little later than this Creed, we notice a very similar sequence of ideas: after the theological study of the three Persons, the "recapitulation" leads back to the Father the whole divine life as to its source; we recognise here already what the Greeks will call the *perichorsis*, and the Latins *circumincession*. Here we have not this movement of flux and reflux, but after the successive contemplation of the three Persons, the adoration of the Trinity in its eternal and immutable unity. Similar characteristics could be seen in the *Letter to Philagrius* on the Divine Unity,¹³ and the *Letter to Theopompus* on the Impassibility of God.¹⁴ This very strong affirmation of the unity of the three divine Persons is a most important document for the history of dogma in the ante-Nicene period. A careful study of it shows that one can no longer represent Eastern theology, even in the school of Origen, as subscribing at that time to Subordinationism, and one has no longer any right to confine to the West and to Rome the orthodox profession of the divine unity.

If after studying this theology we return to the theologian, we must admire him the more. We have shown that he was a great missionary and a founder of churches; from this pagan people he

¹³ This Letter has been published in Syriac by Ryssel, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-70; in Syriac and a Latin translation by Pitra, *Analecta*, Vol. IV, pp. 100-103 and 360-363; the Greek text is in Migne, among the works of St. Gregory of Nyssa, Vol. XLVI, 1101-1108. The attribution of this letter to the Thaumaturge is accepted by Ryssel, *loc. laud.*, by Bonwetsch, *Prot. R. Encyklopädie*, Vol. VII, p. 157, by Harnack, *Chronol.*, Vol. II, p. 100; and by Loofs, *Leitfaden*, p. 224.

¹⁴ Published in Syriac by Ryssel, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-99; in Syriac and Latin by Pitra, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-120, 363-387. Its authenticity is recognised by the authors mentioned in the preceding note.

In addition to these theological works, we would mention the little treatise entitled *Discourse to Tatian on the Soul*, if this really were by St. Gregory. But it is apocryphal, and seems to have been composed between the 5th and 7th centuries. It probably contains a fragment of St. Gregory himself. We have studied this treatise and its sources in *Bulletin de Littérature ecclésiastique*, March 1906, pp. 73-83.

managed in a few years to form a Christian community strong enough to suffer without collapsing the Decian persecution and the Gothic invasion; this Thaumaturge might well be compared to St. Martin; equally he is another St. Hilary. And the source of all this, of this theological knowledge and this missionary apostolate, is the school of Origen, in which the young law student had been won for Christ.

Gregory and his brother Athenodorus took part in the Council of Antioch called against Paul of Samosata;¹⁵ they did not appear at the second;¹⁶ Suidas states that Gregory died in the reign of Aurelian.¹⁷

§ 3. DISCIPLES AND OPPONENTS OF ORIGEN

The Bishops of Laodicea

The two great bishops we have just been considering, Dionysius of Alexandria and Gregory Thaumaturgus, constitute the greatest glories of the Alexandrian theology at this time. In the second rank we find a whole galaxy of scholars and learned men, who were also disciples of Origen. Their works have perished, but their names have been piously recorded by Eusebius the historian.

One of these, Eusebius of Laodicea, was sent from Alexandria to Antioch on the occasion of the Council called against Paul of Samosata. On his way back, he was retained at Laodicea by "the people of this country, who were devoted to divine things," and who made him their bishop.¹ He died shortly afterwards, and was succeeded by another Alexandrian, Anatolius: "In learning, Greek education and philosophy, he was in the front rank of the most illustrious of our contemporaries; arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, dialectics, physics, and rhetoric had been cultivated by him to their highest degree. It is said that for this reason he was considered worthy by his compatriots of establishing at Alexandria the teaching of Aristotle's doctrine."² Theotecnus, Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, had chosen him as his own successor, and had given him

¹⁵ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxviii, 1.

¹⁶ Cf. Bardy, *Paul de Samosate*, p. 299.

¹⁷ *Lexicon*, s.v. *Gregorios*. Cf. Ryssel, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-19.

¹ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 5.

² *Ibid.*, 6.

episcopal consecration. Anatolius, like Eusebius, went to Antioch, and on the way back, was chosen by the faithful of Laodicea to succeed Eusebius, who had just died. He in turn was succeeded at Laodicea by a man of brilliant talent but weak character, Stephen. "His discourses, his philosophy and his Greek learning made him to be admired by many; but he had not the same attachment for the divine faith, as was shown by the persecution which followed; he appeared as a man given to dissimulation, fearful and cowardly, rather than a true philosopher."³ Eusebius adds that the church of Laodicea was raised up again by Theodotus, a clever doctor of the body and also of the soul, and moreover "well trained in divine knowledge."⁴

We thus know the four bishops who ruled at Laodicea during the last years of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries, all of them being distinguished by their talent and erudition, but unequal in moral worth. We see from this example the care taken by the faithful, at least in these churches of Syria and Palestine, to put at their head learned and eloquent men, capable of bringing honour to Christianity among populations which were so fond of fine language, and to this end they even retained strangers if necessary. This is a sign that such men were as yet few in number; the various churches did their best to secure them while they were passing through, and to keep them for the future, as would be done later on in the case of rich patricians such as Pinianus or Paulinus of Nola.

For it is true that, even at this time, after Tertullian and Cyprian, Clement and Origen, Christianity was deficient in defenders who were men of talent, and was still regarded by learned men as a religion of common and uneducated minds.⁵ In the great churches of the East, there were doubtless to be found some theologians of note, more brilliant and more influential than those of Laodicea, but these distinguished minds were rare, and masses around them were uncultivated.⁶

³ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵ Cf. Lactantius, *Divinæ Institutiones*, V, 1, 18-21 (ed. Brandt, pp. 401-402); Batiffol, *La Paix constantinienne*, p. 144.

⁶ We have a proof of this in the affair of Paul of Samosata: in the church of Antioch, even among the Fathers of the Council, there was no one clever enough "to catch this dissimulating and deceitful man," until the priest Malchion intervened. Cf. *infra*, p. 1053.

The Theologians of Alexandria at the end of the Third Century

To bring this chapter to a close, we must briefly mention the theologians of Alexandria who, at the end of the third century, defended or attacked the theses set forth by Origen. The correspondence which passed between the two Dionysii, of Alexandria and of Rome, on the subject of the theology of the Trinity, has revealed to us two contrary currents within the church of Alexandria: the Origenist tradition, represented by the bishop Dionysius and the catechists mentioned by the Bishop of Rome, and in opposition to it, the group of those who were alarmed at this tradition, and denounced it to the Pope. We can still distinguish these two tendencies in the thirty or forty years which follow.⁷

Theognostus and Pierius

We recognise the Origenist tradition in two priests who were catechists at Alexandria: Theognostus, whose activity was chiefly manifested from the death of St. Dionysius until about 280, under Bishop Maximus, and Pierius, who seems to have taught in the course of the following thirty years, from 280 to 310.

Theognostus⁸ wrote seven books entitled *Outlines (Hypotyposes)*. Photius has given us a fairly detailed analysis of them;⁹ a few fragments have come down to us. They display a very marked Origenist doctrine,¹⁰ and it is not difficult to understand that this

⁷ Cf. L. B. Radford, *Three Teachers of Alexandria, Theognostus, Pierius and Peter*, Cambridge, 1908.

⁸ The fragments of Theognostus have been published by Routh, *Reliquæ Sacræ*, Vol. III, pp. 405-422; a new fragment has been published and commented on by Diekamp, *Theologische Quartalschrift*, Vol. LXXXIV, 1902, pp. 481-494. These various fragments and the note by Photius have been once more published and studied by Harnack in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. XXIV (Neue Folge, IX), III, pp. 73-92.

⁹ *Bibl.*, cod. cvi (Migne, P.G., Vol. CIII, 373-376).

¹⁰ According to Photius, Theognostus taught in his second book that the Son is a creature, and that his action extends only to rational beings, and also, he maintained all that Origen said of the Son. The first of these statements is difficult to reconcile with a fragment quoted by Athanasius (*De decretis Nic. synodi*, xxv): "The substance of the Son does not come from without, it does not arise from nothing; it is born of the substance of the Father, as a ray from light, and vapour from water; for neither the ray nor the vapour is the water or the sun; but they are not foreign to them. Thus [the substance of the Son] is not the Father himself, but is not foreign to him, being a derivation of the substance of the Father, this substance moreover is not subject to any division, for just as the sun is not lessened by the rays it sends forth, so also the substance of the

teaching led to the reaction of Peter of Alexandria. At the same time we must add that the summary of Photius seems to be exaggerated if we compare it with one or other of the fragments extant. Harnack recognises some opposition here, but gives the preference to Photius.¹¹ Diekamp suggests that Theognostus, after the letter of Dionysius of Rome, corrected his Subordinationist doctrine;¹² but the fragments are too short and too uncertain in date to give a solid foundation to this hypothesis.¹³

Pierius is mentioned by Eusebius in terms of great praise: "He was very highly esteemed for his ascetical life and his philosophical knowledge; he was wonderfully successful in the study and explanation of divine things and the exposition which he gave of these to the assembly of the church."¹⁴ To these praises St. Jerome and above all Photius add some amplification. "Pierius was called a new Origen," says St. Jerome,¹⁵ and Photius reports that he taught the pre-existence of souls, that his teaching on the Father and the Son was correct, except that he distinguished in them two natures, but that his doctrine on the Holy Spirit was dangerous and plainly subordinationist.¹⁶ Pierius was much given to preaching, and we have many homilies by him, and in particular, one on the Mother of God, and another on the martyr Pamphilus.¹⁷ Pamphilus had

Father undergoes no change by having the Son as its image." Harnack (*op. cit.*, p. 86) emphasises that Theognostus speaks not of the Son but of the substance of the Son, which he distinguishes from that of the Father. He admits that the text is not very clear, and he concludes that the statement of Photius is more important than this whole fragment. The fragment quoted by Diekamp is more interesting; it sets forth in the first place a study of the names of the Son: the name of Son alone is proper to him; *Logos* and *Sophia* are names given to him in Scripture; as *Logos*, the Son is the image of the Father; "having the resemblance of the Father, he has it according to substance and according to number; that is why there is only one *Logos* and only one *Sophia*."

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 86.

¹² Art. quoted, pp. 493-494; cf. the objections by Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-82.

¹³ Diekamp (*op. cit.*, p. 489) also sees in the fragment he has edited a criticism of Lucian of Antioch, cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 91. This hypothesis is ingenious, but it remains unproved.

¹⁴ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 27.

¹⁵ *De viris illustribus*, lxxvii.

¹⁶ *Biblioth.*, cod. cxviii.

¹⁷ Philip of Sidon, cf. De Boor, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Vol. V, 2, p. 171. The fragments of Pierius will be found in Routh, *Reliquæ sacræ*, Vol. III, pp. 423-435, and in the study by De Boor just mentioned (*Texte*, Vol. V, 2, pp. 165-184). A briefer treatment in Migne, P.G., Vol. X, 241-246.

been a disciple of Pierius, and it may well be that it was from Pierius he derived his own Origenist doctrine.¹⁸

St. Peter of Alexandria

The theologians we have just mentioned show the lasting influence of Origen's teaching at Alexandria. But it did not flourish there without opposition; it was vigorously attacked by St. Peter, who was Bishop of Alexandria¹⁹ and who crowned his life by martyrdom. Eusebius does homage to his exemplary life and to his martyrdom;²⁰ he says nothing of his theology, the anti-Origenist tendency of which can have been little to his taste. This silence has deprived St. Jerome and ourselves of our habitual source of information. A few titles and a few lines are all that remain to us of the doctrinal output of Peter of Alexandria.²¹ But these fragments nevertheless suffice to show its direction. In his treatise *Against the Monophysites*, Leontius of Byzantium quotes two passages from a work of Peter opposing the pre-existence of souls. This doctrine, says the holy bishop, "comes from the Hellenic philosophy; it is foreign to those who wish to live piously in Christ." In the Acts of the Council of Ephesus in 431, we find three quotations taken from the work of Peter of Alexandria on the Godhead; they reject subordinationism; they also reject the allegorical interpretation of Genesis.²²

¹⁸ We must give at least a brief reference to Hierakas. He is known to us through St. Epiphanius (*Hær.*, lxxvii). According to this father, Hierakas was about the year 300 the leader of a group of ascetics of both sexes who lived at Leontopolis in the Delta. He wrote various works in Coptic and in Greek, but we do not know their titles. In them he defended several Origenist theses, particularly in the matter of the resurrection; he condemned marriage; his doctrine on the Trinity was on the whole more correct than that of Origen, but he regarded Melchisedech as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. On this error, and others connected with it, see Bardy, art. *Melchisédecien*, in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, Vol. X, cols. 513-516.

¹⁹ From the summer of 300 to November 311.

²⁰ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 31: "After Theonas, who had served for nineteen years, Peter occupied the episcopal throne of Alexandria. Before the persecution, he governed this church for three years; he spent the rest of his life in a very severe asceticism practised in common, and saw to the general needs of the churches without hiding himself. In consequence, in the ninth year of the persecution he was beheaded, and honoured with the crown of martyrdom."

²¹ Routh, *Reliquæ sacræ*, Vol. IV, pp. 19-82; Migne, P.G., Vol. XVIII, 449-522; Pitra, *Analecta sacra*, Vol. IV, pp. 187-195, 425-430.

²² Texts quoted by Procopius, *apud* Routh, *op. cit.*, pp. 50, 78. In the same work (p. 48) will be found a fragment quoted by Leontius of Byzantium on the two natures in Jesus Christ.

These fragments are of great value to us because they throw some light on the doctrinal history of the church of Alexandria during this obscure period extending from the death of Dionysius to the episcopate of Alexander. They are sufficient to show us in St. Peter a forerunner of the great bishops of the fourth century, St. Alexander and St. Athanasius. Though the theologian is almost unknown to us, we are better acquainted with the pastor of souls.

The Penitential Question

After the first outburst of the Diocletian persecution the penitential question arose, as it had arisen fifty years earlier after the Decian persecution. The decisions and directions given by St. Peter were inspired by the same spirit as those of St. Dionysius, St. Cyprian, and St. Cornelius; they are known to us through the penitential canons which have been preserved for us in the canonical collections.²³ It will be useful to indicate their principal enactments, following the order of the canons themselves:

1. Those who, after being denounced, put in prison, and subjected to cruel torments, have finally lost courage, are worthy of pardon, for they have yielded only to the weakness of the flesh; they bear the wounds of Jesus, and already for three years they have done penance. They are to be given a further penance of forty days, beginning from the day in which they informed us of their return; during this time they are to fast, to watch, and to pray.

2. Those who have not been tormented, but have been overcome by the sufferings and infection of the prisons, are to add a year of penance to the time already fulfilled. It is true they have been weak, and very blind, but they were delivered up to suffer for the Name; they have been comforted in prison by the charity of the brethren; they will return all this a hundredfold by doing their best to free themselves from the captivity of the devil.

3. Those who, without undergoing either torments or imprisonment, went spontaneously to apostatise, must spend four more years in penance.

4. Those who have freed themselves by fraud, by procuring false certificates, or by sending pagan friends in their stead, are to do six months' penance.

²³ P. de Lagarde, *Reliquiæ juris ecclesiæ antiquissimæ*, Leipzig, 1856, pp. 63-73 (Greek text) and 99-117 (Syriac text). These canons seem to have formed part of the Easter letter of 306.

5. Those who sent in their place their Christian slaves are to do four years' penance, and their guilty slaves one year.

6. Those who have expiated a former apostasy by imprisonment or torment have no need of any other penance; we receive them with joy.

7. Those who went out to meet those who sought them acted imprudently, and in opposition to the example of the Lord and the apostles; nevertheless if they resisted, we admit them to communion, and retain them in the clerical offices they may have held. On the other hand, those clerics who in these circumstances defaulted cannot be restored to the ranks of the clergy, even after a new confession.

8. Yet we approve the conduct of those who thus declared themselves in the course of the interrogations of other Christians, above all when they did so to keep up the courage of these others.

9. It is good to pray for those whom the violence of torments has caused to fall.

10. Those are not to be accused who redeemed themselves by money;

11. nor those who fled, as was done by St. Paul at Ephesus, St. Peter in his prison at Jerusalem, and the child Jesus at Bethlehem.

12. Those whose mouths have been held open with bridles or chains (in order to make them drink the wine of libations or to eat food offered to idols), or who have had their hands burnt by the incense of the sacrifices, are no less to be regarded as confessors of Christ, and honoured as such.²⁴

This prudent and firm legislation is based on principles which the Church has professed from the beginning: she blames and censures over-bold provocation of the authorities; she authorises flight from persecutors: she makes allowances for violence which the body may have suffered, but in which the will had no part; she condemns all collapses, punishing them with penalties varying in severity according to their gravity. In all these sanctions we recognise the fatherly wisdom which fifty years earlier had inspired the great bishops of Rome, Carthage and Alexandria.²⁵

The Meletian Schism

Once again, the penitential legislation was the occasion of a schism. Meletius, Bishop of Lycopolis, had profited by the imprison-

²⁴ Migne, P.G., Vol. XVIII, 468-508.

²⁵ The reconciliation of apostates is not here postponed, as it had been previously, to the day of death; but the peace of the Church had not been thereby restored, as the sequel sufficiently shows; the same consideration had led Cyprian in 253 to modify the first severe measures. Cf. Bk. III, p. 850.

ment of four bishops during the persecution to invade their churches against their wills, and also that of Peter of Alexandria, who was rendered powerless by the persecution if not actually thrown into prison. The injured bishops sent to Meletius a vehement protest:

Our fathers have established and laid down the rule that no bishop may hold an ordination in other churches. . . . But you, without regard to their decisions, without thought of the future, or of the traditional law of our blessed fathers pleasing to Christ, or of the honour of our great bishop and father Peter, upon whom we all depend, according to the hope we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, unmindful of our imprisonments, our trials, or the thousand insults we suffer every day, to the grief and distress of all, have gone so far as to overthrow everything. . . .²⁶

Meletius was not moved by this letter; on the contrary, he went to Alexandria, set aside the representatives of Bishop Peter, and substituted for them men of his own choice. St. Peter replied to this usurpation by forbidding his flock to communicate with Meletius. The four prelates died martyrs; the persecution diminished; the Bishop of Alexandria resumed once more the government of his church, and settled the status of apostates in the way we have mentioned.

Meletius at once took up a contrary attitude, and made himself a champion of rigorism, as Novatian had done in Rome. The church of Alexandria was torn asunder by the schism. Very soon the persecution was revived; many Christians were deported to the mines of Phæno. Meletius was sent there, together with a certain number of his adherents; he there resumed his propaganda and his campaign; partisans of Peter and partisans of Meletius confronted one another even in this convict prison. In the spring of 311, the edict of Galerius restored to the captives their freedom. Meletius returned to Egypt; but very soon Maximin renewed the persecution, and on 25th November 311 St. Peter was beheaded.

This glorious death did not put an end to the controversy; the Meletians set up their own church, the "church of the martyrs" as they called it, in opposition to the church of Peter, ruled by the bishop St. Alexander after the very short episcopate of Achillas. The Council of Nicæa tried in vain to bring the schism to an end

²⁶ Migne, P.G., Vol. X, 1565-1568.

by a policy of indulgence; it was in the ranks of the Meletians that Arius, himself a Meletian, found in Egypt his most enthusiastic followers; Athanasius would have a painful proof of this, especially in the Council of Tyre in 335.²⁷

It is not for us to follow out this history, which belongs to the fourth century; but it was desirable for us to explain the origins of this schism. Independently of the doctrinal controversies, it sowed amongst the clergy of Alexandria²⁸ and of the whole of Egypt seeds of discord which Arianism would bring to full fruition. Arius was an adherent of Meletius; it was from the Meletian schism that Arianism arose and grew.²⁹

²⁷ Cf. D'Alès, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-242, "Le schisme mélétien d'Égypte." The papyri published in 1924 by M. H. Idris Bell have added to the documentation of this matter two interesting items of information which are translated on pp. 232 and 234 of that work.

²⁸ It was the clergy in the first place who sided with the schism of Meletius. At the beginning of the movement, Epiphanius says that Peter of Alexandria, pressed by Meletius at a meeting of the clergy, laid down his mantle to separate the two camps: "Let those who are with me come to this side, and those who are with Meletius go to the other." Epiphanius adds that the majority of the clergy went to the side of Meletius.

²⁹ The schisms which arose at Rome and in Africa on the occasion of this same persecution will be referred to later.

THE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH AT THE
END OF THE THIRD CENTURY§ I. PAUL OF SAMOSATA¹*Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch*

THE death of Valerian in 260 had been the beginning of a series of disasters for the Roman Empire: Antioch, Tarsus, and Cæsarea in Cappadocia had been captured, pillaged and burnt. The Prince of Palmyra, Septimius Odaenathus II, thereupon assumed the title of king and set himself up as lieutenant of the Emperor Gallienus, against Sapor and also against Macrienus, who had elevated to the empire his two sons Quietus and Macrienus. In 262 Septimius triumphed over these two groups of enemies: he defeated Sapor before Ctesiphon; and took the town of Emesa where Quietus was killed, while Macrienus and his second son perished in Illyria.

It was through these events that Paul of Samosata rose to the episcopate: in 260 the Bishop of Antioch, Demetrianus, died a captive of the Persians; Paul succeeded to him. He relied on the support of the Palmyrian dynasty; he represented himself at Antioch as "ducenarius" or Chancellor of the Exchequer; though born of poor parents, he amassed a considerable fortune, and startled the whole city by his insolent display of luxury.²

First Council (264)

Paul crowned all these disorders by teaching heresy. In 264 a Council was called; the most prominent of its members were: Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; Gregory and Athenodorus his brother, pastors of the Pontine churches; Helenus, Bishop of Tarsus; Nicomas, Bishop of Iconium; Hymeneus, Bishop of Jerusalem; Theotecnus of Cæsarea in Palestine; and Maximus of

¹ Bibliography.—G. Bardy, *Paul de Samosate, étude historique*, new edn., Louvain, 1929; F. Loofs, *Paulus von Samosata*, Leipzig, 1924.

² *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxvii, 1.

Bostra.³ Dionysius of Alexandria was invited but excused himself because of his ill health and his old age (he died in fact shortly afterwards), but he made his views clear by a letter.⁴

Faced by the bishops of the council, Paul dissimulated, shuffled, and promised to amend, and the bishops separated without coming to a conclusion. But in an endeavour to keep this slippery man in the path of orthodoxy, six of the bishops drew up a formula of faith, and requested the accused to subscribe to it. This document is of great interest because of the doctrine it affirms, and also because of the vigour of the expressions which emphasise its meaning:

If anyone refuses to believe and confess that the Son of God is God, we consider that he is outside the ecclesiastical rule, and all the Catholic churches are in agreement with us.

The bishops set forth at length the pre-existence of the Son, his divinity, his office in the creation of the world, and his appearances in the Old Testament. They dwell on his Incarnation:

[We confess] that the Son who is with the Father is God and Lord of all created things, and that he was sent from heaven by the Father, and that, being made flesh, he became man. Hence the body born of the Virgin, which received all the plenitude of the divinity, was united in an immutable way to the divinity and deified, without any change in the Word himself; that is why the same Jesus Christ was prophesied as God and man in the Law and the prophets, and is now the object of the faith of the whole church under heaven: God, who has stripped himself of equality with God; man, of the race of David according to the flesh.

This long profession of faith finishes with a peremptory summons: "Out of many other points, we have chosen these few beliefs, and we wish to know if you think as we do, and if you teach them, and will subscribe or not to what we have written."⁵

³ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxviii, 1.

⁴ Eusebius remarks (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxvii, 2): "Dionysius . . . set out in a letter his opinion on the matter"; the Fathers of the Council say more explicitly: "He wrote a letter to Antioch, but he did not do the heresiarch the honour of addressing himself to him directly; it was the whole Church that he addressed" (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 3).

⁵ The text of this document will be found in Loofs, *Paulus von Samosata*, pp. 324-330, and in Bardy, *Paul de Samosate*, pp. 13-19. Its authenticity, long questioned, has been established firmly by these two historians. Cf. Bardy, *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. VI, 1916, pp. 17-32.

Scandalous Life of Paul

The Bishop of Antioch does not seem to have worried about this letter; the Council had dispersed and his accusers were far away; he returned to his ostentatious and licentious life. The Council which condemned him gave this description of him:

He organises a theatrical pomp in the Church assemblies, seeking for glory, appealing to the imaginations and attracting the attention of the simple. . . . Those who do not praise him and who do not wave their handkerchiefs as in the theatres, who do not cry out, or stand up, as do those of his party, men and girls who listen to him in a shameless way—those who listen to him as one ought to do in the house of God, with respect and reserve, are singled out by him and made the subject of reproaches. The interpreters of the Word who have left this world are treated by him with disdain, in a rude manner in the assembly, while he boasts of himself emphatically, not as a bishop, but as a sophist and a charlatan. As for the chants in honour of Our Lord Jesus Christ, he has forbidden them as being too modern, and written by too modern men; but in his own honour, and openly in the church on Easter Day he caused women to sing whom one would be horrified to hear. . . . He is not willing to confess with us that the Son of God came down from heaven . . . ; but those who sing in his honour and utter his praises among the people say that their wicked master is an angel who has descended from heaven; this he does not prevent, but on the contrary he is present at their discourses, insolent man as he is.⁶

This picture, drawn at Antioch itself by the judges of the unworthy bishop, brings him out into full light. Of all the heretics of the age, there was not one who had denied the Christian faith and outraged the Church with such impudence. Nevertheless we recognise here, pushed to the extreme, some features observed elsewhere: fifteen years earlier, in his *De lapsis*, St. Cyprian denounced certain bishops who “despised their divine functions and made themselves attendants of the great landowners”; that was a feeble anticipation of what we now see in this Bishop of Antioch who was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Above all we are reminded of the reproaches directed by Hippolytus previously against the Roman Adoptionists, Artemon and his disciples: for these men the adoration of Christ was an innovation, and they had to be reminded of “the numerous canticles and hymns composed by the faithful brethren of the earliest days, in which they sang of Christ as the

⁶ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 9-11.

Word of God, and worshipped him as God.”⁷ Paul of Samosata in his turn decreed that “all the chants in honour of Our Lord Jesus Christ are too modern, and written by men who are too modern.” At the same time he encouraged his admirers to praise himself, and to sing hymns in his honour; he thus prepared the way for Arius, who likewise was to compose poems exalting his own person and his doctrine.⁸

Second Council (268)

Such abuses could not be tolerated for long; the calling together of the six bishops testifies to their anxiety and their desire to put an end to the trouble. Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea of Cappadocia, who had been the most influential member of the first Council, felt that he had been tricked by the heretic; accordingly a new Council was called. Firmilian started out on the journey to Antioch, but was unable to complete it, and died at Tarsus.⁹ The assembly to which he was proceeding comprised a great number of bishops,¹⁰ and was to pronounce on this matter the definitive judgment which the situation required.

Condemnation of Paul of Samosata

It was not without difficulty that the heretic was at last convicted and condemned; the credit for it belongs above all to the priest Malchion:

⁷ *Ibid.*, V, xxviii, 3. Cf. Bk. III, p. 727.

⁸ We may also recall what Dionysius of Alexandria said of Nepos, Bishop of Arsinoë, and his rhapsodies (cf. *supra*, p. 1026). Here we do not find any sacrilegious abuse, but we notice the great importance at that time of the Church's chants.

⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 4. The synodical letter of the Council says: “Firmilian came twice, and condemned the innovations introduced by Paul; we who are present here know this and testify to it, and many others know it as we do. Paul promised to change; Firmilian believed him, and hoped that, without injury to doctrine, the matter would have a fitting end. He temporised, deceived by this man, who denied his God and his Lord, and did not keep the faith he had possessed. Firmilian had started from Antioch, and had reached Tarsus; he knew by experience the malice of this wicked man. But we met together and called him, and were waiting for his arrival when his life came to an end.” From this passage many historians have inferred that the definitive Council was the third one. This inference does not seem to be a necessary one: Firmilian had gone twice to Antioch, but this does not prove that he was present at two different Councils. Moreover, it is hardly likely that the Fathers would have allowed themselves to be deceived twice. Cf. Bardy, *Paul de Samosate*, pp. 293-294.

¹⁰ St. Athanasius speaks of seventy bishops at least (*De synodis*, xliii); St. Hilary mentions eighty (*De synodis*, lxxxvi); quoted by Bardy, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

He was an eloquent man, who had been the head of a philosophical school at Antioch in which the teaching of the Greeks was set forth; because of the excellent purity of his faith in Christ he was honoured with the priesthood in the church of that country. He argued against Paul; he alone was strong enough to overcome this dissimulating and deceitful man.¹¹

The account of the discussion, which Eusebius was still able to consult, would be of the greatest interest to us; unfortunately we have only a few fragments.¹² Failing a complete account, we could wish to have in its entirety the synodical letter. Addressed by the Fathers of the Council to Dionysius, Bishop of Rome, and to Maximus, Bishop of Alexandria, this letter "established clearly the perverse heterodoxy of Paul, the refutations and the questions which the bishops had put to him, and it also gave an account of his whole life and conduct."¹³ From this document Eusebius has transcribed the censure of the morals of the condemned bishop, but not the exposition of his teaching; it is difficult to supply the place of this omission.¹⁴ The document concluded with an excommunication in these terms:

¹¹ Cf. *Hist. eccles.*, VII, XXIX, 2. On the method of these discussions, compare what Eusebius tells us concerning the argumentation of Origen at Bostra against Bishop Beryllus. Eusebius had the text of this before him (*Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxiii, 3). Dionysius described his discussion with Nepos in greater detail (*Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxiv, 8) the argument continued for "three consecutive days, from dawn till evening."

¹² These fragments have been collected together and commented on by Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-79.

¹³ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 1.

¹⁴ Paul's teaching has been exposed by Bardy in his work, III, pp. 427-520, and more briefly in his article *Paul de Samosate* in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, Vol. XII, cols. 49-51. It is difficult to set forth Paul's theology with precision, and it would be rash to claim to do so. But we can at least determine some of its features: first of all, its Monarchianism: Paul did not recognise three persons in God, but "he gave the name of Father to God who has created all things, that of Son to him who was purely man, and that of Spirit to the grace which resided in the apostles" (Leontius, *De sectis*, iii, 3). Jesus was greater than the prophets or Moses: "Wisdom has not dwelt in such a way in any other. It was in the prophets, and still more in Moses, and in many masters, but more in Christ, as in a temple." This indwelling of Wisdom is not an incarnation: Jesus Christ is not the Word; the Word is greater than Christ; Mary did not engender the Word; she received the Word, she engendered a man equal to us, though better in every respect, for he was born of the Holy Spirit and of the promises and the Scriptures, and because grace was upon him. All this brings us back to Adoptionism: Christ is only a man like the rest, but he is holier.

One last feature, which concerns the history of Christian doctrine, must be mentioned. The Fathers of the Council of Antioch condemned the use of the

We have therefore been obliged, after excommunicating this obstinate adversary of God, to establish in his place for the Catholic Church another bishop, in order to obey the Providence of God, as we are conscious of doing. This is Domnus, the son of the blessed Demetrian who before Paul governed this church well. He is possessed of all the qualities which belong to a bishop; we inform you of this, so that you may write to him and receive his letters of communion. Let the other write to Artemas and let the followers of Artemas hold communion with him.¹⁵

The Council which passed this sentence seems to have met during the autumn of 268. At that date Odaenathus, King of Palmyra, had died (267). His widow Zenobia had taken the reins of power, in trust for her sons.¹⁶ She extended her sway as far as Alexandria on the one hand, and as far as Chalcedon on the other. But at the end of 271, Egypt was reconquered by Probus, the future emperor, and in 272, after defeating the soldiers of Zenobia three times, Aurelian captured Palmyra. He pardoned the queen and her sons, but had her counsellors put to death, including Longinus the rhetorician.

Expulsion of Paul

This collapse of Zenobia's power deprived Paul of Samosata of the support which had protected him. Defying the conciliar decision he had remained in the episcopal house, and the Catholics had not been able to dislodge him. They appealed to Aurelian; the emperor "ordered that the house should be given to those to whom the bishops of Italy and of the city of Rome should allot it. In this way the man was expelled from the church with the utmost shame

word *homoousios* (consubstantial), because Paul had employed it in order to efface the personal distinction between the Father and the Son, and thereby to make Christ "to be Son of God only as a word or the sound of a voice." Cf. the testimony of St. Epiphanius (*Hær.*, LXV, 1; LXXI, 11), and especially of Basil of Ancyra (*apud* Epiphanius, *Hær.*, LXXIII, 1, and xii-xxii), followed by St. Hilary (*De synodis*, lxxxi). This brings out the fluctuations in the terminology, and the obscurities to which these led: less than ten years previously, Dionysius of Alexandria was criticised for not using the term *homoousios*; at Antioch it was set aside because of its abuse by Paul of Samosata; fifty years later on it would be insisted upon at Nicæa. Cf. P. Galtier, *L'Homoousios de Paul de Samosate*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XIII, 1922, pp. 30-45.

¹⁵ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 17.

¹⁶ First on behalf of Vaballath, and then, on his death (271), for her two other sons.

by the secular arm.”¹⁷ From this date Paul of Samosata disappears from history. He had had some adherents,¹⁸ but these were doubtless for the most part timid folk who were terrified by his boldness and who did not dare to oppose him. After his fall, his party disappeared. But in 325 the Council of Nicæa still had to legislate concerning the reconciliation of partisans of Paul who had returned to the Catholic Church or who wished to do so.¹⁹ As for the doctrine of the heresiarch, this left even less traces. It had been denounced as a new form of the heresy of Artemon; and later on the Nestorians were accused of renewing the same errors. But these facts denote less a real filiation than a similarity existing between all these heresies; in Artemon and Paul of Samosata, they resulted from Rationalism; they led directly to the denial of the divinity of Christ, and this led to their destruction.

§ 2. ST. LUCIAN OF ANTIOCH AND HIS SCHOOL¹

The Problem of Lucian of Antioch

The person, doctrine and influence of St. Lucian of Antioch raise many problems which it is difficult to solve. A historian who studied this matter with the greatest care wrote at the end of one of his early works: “We have not succeeded in throwing light on

¹⁷ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx, 19. Bardy (*op. cit.*, p. 363) gives a very correct interpretation of this judgment: “By having recourse to Aurelian, the Catholics of Antioch gave a sufficient proof of their loyalty, and clearly distinguished their own cause from that of Zenobia. But Rome is here regarded as the capital of Christianity, not as that of the Empire. If the emperor decides that the property belongs to those who communicate with Rome, it is because he cannot ignore the unique place which the Church of Rome occupies in regard to all Christians.”

¹⁸ *Hist., eccles.*, VII, xxx, 10. In the synodical letter, the Fathers of the Council speak of the bishops of the neighbouring country, and of the priests who flatter them in their sermons.

¹⁹ Canon 19. Cf. Bardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 390 *et seq.*

¹ Bibliography.—Cf. Bardy, *Le symbole de Lucien d'Antioche*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. III, 1912, pp. 139-155; 230-244; *Saint Lucien d'Antioche et son école*, *ibid.*, Vol. XXII, 1932, pp. 437-462; *Le Discours apologetique de saint Lucien d'Antioche*, in *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, Vol. IX, cols. 1024-1031; *Recherches sur saint Lucien d'Antioche et son école*, Paris, 1936. Besides these works by G. Bardy, it will be profitable to consult the histories of dogma and of Arianism, such as Tixeront, *Histoire des Dogmes*, Vol. II, pp. 20-22 and 27; Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. II, pp. 187-190; D'Alès, *Le Dogme de Nicée*, pp. 52-56; K. Muller, *Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 375-378; Kirsch, *Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 326.

the puzzling personality of Lucian of Antioch. Neither rehabilitated nor condemned, this learned exegete remains for us a mystery."² That statement was made more than thirty years ago. Since then this problem has been the subject of many discussions and many researches. Such great labour has doubtless not been in vain, but the mystery has not been entirely clarified.

Lucian's Theology

During the great persecution, after the Edict of Maximin, a priest named Lucian was arrested at Antioch, transferred to Nicomedia, and put to death on the 7th January 312.³ The Empress Helen and the whole imperial family regarded him with particular veneration. The Bishop of the imperial city, Nicomedia, boasted that Lucian had been his master. Nor was he the only one to do so: the upholders of the Arian heresy, beginning with Arius himself, were at some time pupils of Lucian: at the time when the heresy broke out, they occupied several of the chief sees of the East. Philostorgius mentions among them: Eusebius of Nicomedia, Maris of Chalcedon, Theognis of Nicæa, Leontius who became Bishop of Antioch, Antony of Tarsus, and many others.⁴

This whole group of "Collucianists," as Arius himself calls them,⁵ constituted a very closely knit party, which ardently upheld the cause of Arius. Against them, St. Alexander of Alexandria, who led the attack against Arianism, directly accused Lucian as the master of Arius and also as the successor of Paul of Samosata. He wrote thus in his letter addressed to the bishops of Egypt, the Thebais, Libya, Pentapolis, Syria, Lycia, Pamphylia, Asia, Cappadocia, and other neighbouring places: ⁶

You yourselves have been instructed by God; you are not unaware that this teaching, which is setting itself up against the faith of the Church, is the doctrine of Ebion and Artemas; it is the perverse theology of Paul of Samosata, who was expelled from the church at Antioch by a conciliar sentence of bishops from all places; his successor

² Bardy, *art. cit.*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. III, 1912, p. 244.

³ Cf. E. Schwartz, *Zur Geschichte des Athanasius*, in *Nachrichten der K. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, 1904, p. 529, n. 4.

⁴ *Hist. eccles.*, II, xiv.

⁵ Cf. Theodoret, *Hist. eccles.*, I, v, 4.

⁶ Theodoret, *Hist. eccles.*, I, iv. Theodoret is transcribing the copy sent to Alexander of Byzantium.

Lucian remained for a long time excommunicated under three bishops; the dregs of the impiety of those heretics have been absorbed by these men who have arisen from nothing. . . . Arius, Achillas, and the whole band of their companions in malice.

It seems impossible to reject a testimony so close to the facts and of so solemn a character.⁷ We must not infer from it that the theology of Lucian was identical with that of Paul of Samosata,⁸ but only that Lucian, like Paul, misrepresented the divinity of the Son of God, and in that respect opened the way to Arius.⁹

The Antiochene Origins of Arianism

This discussion was necessary, not only to understand as far as is possible the enigmatic personality of Lucian of Antioch, but above all to bring out the source of Arianism as an Antiochene rather than an Alexandrian heresy. Doubtless it was first of all taught at Alexandria, but even so it was taught by one who was a pupil of the school of Antioch. Moreover, throughout the fourth century it will not succeed in taking root at Alexandria or in Egypt, but it will implant itself deeply in the whole dependency of Antioch.¹⁰ In its literal exegesis, and its captious and rationalistic

⁷ Certainly the difficulties are great; nevertheless I do not think that this testimony can be set aside, as is done by Bardy (*Recherches sur saint Lucien*, pp. 50-59). Only ten years separate this letter from Lucian's death; the Bishop of Alexandria, in sending it to all the bishops of the East, could not speak of this prolonged excommunication of Lucian, the master of so many bishops, without serious protests if the accusation were a false one.

⁸ Arianism does not derive from Monarchianism, as does the heresy of Paul of Samosata, but from Subordinationism; the Bishop of Alexandria does not say anything to the contrary, but he includes in one and the same condemnation all those who deny the divinity of the Son of God, Ebion, Artemas, Paul, Lucian and Arius.

⁹ Some are surprised that from the school of Lucian, excommunicated under three bishops of Antioch, should have come so many bishops, and certainly their elections are astonishing. We may say, as a partial explanation, that if Lucian was excommunicated under the three bishops, Domnus, Timæus and Cyril, the penalty came to an end at the latest when Bishop Cyril was in 303 condemned to the mines and replaced by Tyrannus. This brings us to twenty years before the letter of Alexander. In the interval, the suspicion with which Lucian had been regarded had been dispelled by his martyrdom; the prestige of his learning could have recommended his old pupils to the choice of the Christians; cf. what we said above (p. 1041) about the bishops of Laodicea. We may add that the Collucianists appear to us as very closely knit together; they doubtless helped each other to obtain these great sees of the East.

¹⁰ Cf. Bardy, *Saint Lucien d'Antioche et son école*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXII, 1932, p. 445. The bishops of Palestine were to a great

reasoning, Arianism is connected, not with the idealism of Origen, but much more with the Scriptural labours of Lucian¹¹ and the dialectics of Paul of Samosata. At the same time we must admit that the subordinationism of Origen provided a certain support for the theology of Arius. Throughout the East which had been so deeply penetrated by the influence of Origen, the negations of Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia will often meet, if not with sympathy, at least with hesitation; they arise from those temerarious speculations concerning the hierarchy of the divine persons which we have pointed out in Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, and in some of their successors. Already we have a foretaste of the violence and the dangers of the conflict; to bring about the triumph of the Trinitarian theology so firmly defended by Dionysius of Rome, there will be required the unshakable constancy of St. Athanasius, upheld by the authority of the See of Rome.

extent in agreement with the Lucianists, while the majority of the bishops of Egypt and the Pentapolis grouped themselves around the Bishop of Alexandria.

¹¹ Cf. Bardy, *Saint Lucien d'Antioche et son école*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXII, 1932, p. 454: "His teaching [i.e. that of Lucian], in the measure in which we are able to judge it according to those who formed it, was essentially Biblical; . . . like Origen before him, he was a Scripturist; but the careful attention he gave to the text itself of the Scriptures must have kept him free from the fantasies of the Allegorical school; he led his pupils into the sphere of a positive exegesis which was doubtless less brilliant than the spiritual interpretation."

RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES IN THE THIRD CENTURY, AND THEIR ACTION UPON THE CHURCH¹

§ I. THE DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSIES

Scope of the Christian Faith in the Third Century

THE history of the Church in the course of the third century, its progressive expansion and the development of its doctrine have been described in the preceding chapters stage by stage. After studying the persecution under Severus, we have been able to follow, in Rome, Africa, Alexandria and in Palestine, the strong growth of the Christian Faith; from 250 to 260 Decius and Valerian endeavoured by terrible assaults to curb this development; but the persecutors died, and the Church resumed its work of conquest; it pervaded the Roman world, penetrating one after another all the provinces of the Empire and all classes of society.

This conquest of the masses was a triumph for the Christian faith, but it also constituted a great danger for it. Would the Christian leaven be sufficiently powerful to leaven all this paste, or would it lose itself in this great mass? Would the leaders of the Church be the "salt of the earth," or would they instead lose their savour and be fit only to be trodden under foot? This problem became especially acute in this century, and the Gospel had to give a proof of its power. The facts we have set forth suffice to show that the Church came triumphantly through this test, but it will be useful to bring together here the various features which mutually enlighten and complete one another.

Towards the end of the first period of peace (220-250), on the eve of the Decian persecution, the Church was proud of its conquests, but at the same time it was anxious about them. Origen, in his books against Celsus, stressed the miraculous propagation of Christianity, and saw in it a proof of its divine power; but at the same date, speaking to Christians, he reminded them of the times

¹ Bibliography.—Same as for chs. xvi, xxiii, xxiv, xxvii.

of the persecutions, and lamented the decay of fervour.² St. Cyprian similarly recognised the weaknesses of the Christians of Carthage, and described these with a severe precision.³

Apostasies and Repentance

When the persecution descended upon this half converted mass, the collapses, as we have seen,⁴ were very numerous. Cyprian at Carthage and Dionysius at Alexandria described the multitudes of apostates:

Some were pale and trembling, not as people who were to offer sacrifice, but as if they were themselves to be sacrificed and immolated to idols. Thus, they were assailed by the mocking laughter of the numerous people around them, and it was manifest that they were frightened of everything, of dying as much as of offering sacrifice. Some others, nevertheless, ran forward to the altars in a resolute way, and protested with boldness that they had never been Christians. . . . The remainder either followed the bad example of one or other kind, or else they fled.⁵

Are we to say that these apostates had never been Christians? That would be too severe a judgment, contradicted by the sequel. For when the persecution ceased, these people returned to the Church, claiming or begging for pardon; they were given a penance lasting as long as they lived, and the majority submitted to this. Their faith had not been strong enough to enable them to overcome torments and accept death; but at least it was sincere enough to make pagan life intolerable to them, and to keep them to the end of their days at the doors of the Church, in a humble and severe spirit of penitence.

These apostasies and penances, then, reveal in a great number of Christians the weakness of a faith which was nevertheless sincere. What was thus revealed in the hard light of the persecutions had a less manifest effect on the Church during the long periods of calm. Thus Novatian, who in the days of Decius protested that "he no longer wanted to be a priest, because he had adopted an-

² Cf. *supra*, p. 930.

³ Cf. Bk. III, p. 846.

⁴ Cf. Bk. III, p. 847.

⁵ Dionysius, *apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xli, 11-12.

other philosophy,"⁶ would, after the persecution, arrange to be consecrated irregularly by three bishops, and set up his own chair against that of Cornelius.

The Religious Tendencies

These weaknesses in faith, and the apostasies, schisms, and heresies which they provoked, can doubtless be explained by the infirmity of pagans who were laden with a heavy burden of heredity, and had been only imperfectly converted, but they also were in part caused by the evil influences which threatened Christians at that time, and by the religious tendencies which troubled them and sometimes led them astray. We will study here more closely these tendencies and their influence upon the Christian world of the third century.

Weakness of the Roman Empire

If we consider, in the first place, the external circumstances in which the Church's action developed, we find a first danger threatening its unity. In the Apostolic age, the Roman world had been ruled by a powerful authority and had begun to enjoy the blessings of peace after lengthy upsets. For this it was grateful to the Empire as such, and this realisation of well-being lessened the regret for lost liberties. But in the period we have now reached, the Roman authority was discredited by reason of its abuses. The Empire, in the hands of strangers, or still more often, of unworthy adventurers, was now incapable of assuring the union of all the nations it had subjugated and which, in presence of its weakness, were becoming aware once more of their power. The Palmyrian affair is an example of this: certainly it lasted only ten years, but these ten years revealed to the East the weakness of the Roman edifice.

Divisions in the Church

The Church also suffered from these divisions: the Origenist quarrel set up against the union between Alexandria, Rome and the West, the agreement of all the Oriental provinces, and thus

⁶ Letter from Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xlii, 16.

we already have an anticipation of the conflicts which will arise out of the Arian crisis. Even within the Western provinces themselves, national tendencies appeared, threatening the unity of the Empire and sometimes that of the Church: we find in Arnobius and Commodian ⁷ a hatred of Rome unknown to the early Africans, and one which will very soon give a strong support to the Donatist schism. It was also in the course of the third century that within the Church there began to arise Syriac or Coptic literatures, which were indeed instruments of propaganda, but also of emancipation: Hellenism thus lost its literary leadership, as Rome lost its political headship.

To keep together these divergent tendencies, the central authority had to tighten its hold; it did not fail to do so. The activity of Fabian, Cornelius, and Dionysius of Rome was directed in this sense, and showed itself to be effective.⁸

Threats of Schism

In the Church itself, we find threats of schism more serious than in the first century when Christians were still only a "little flock," and when all those persecuted or even martyred by the Pagan society came closer together. Already at that early date, dissensions broke out occasionally, as at Corinth for instance between the followers of Paul, Cephas, Apollo, and those of Christ; forty years later some restless minds troubled once more this same Church of Corinth and refused to obey the presbyters. But these local quarrels were but brief and feverish outbursts which a letter of St. Paul or of St. Clement would pacify. At that time the Church, possessing neither wealth nor power, did not tempt either the cupidity of men or their ambition; and it was so closely knit together that it was not possible to make a schism therein without being expelled. But by the third century, the prestige of the Church was already so great that Decius saw in the Bishop of Rome a more formidable rival than any pretender to the Empire; and very ambitious Christians might hope to recruit a party from among the great and mingled masses of Christians. A contested election at that time or a disciplinary quarrel would be enough to lead to the organising of a little church such as that of Hippolytus or Novatian at Rome,

⁷ Cf. *infra*, p. 1095.

⁸ Cf. *infra*, pp. 1122-1145.

or that of Felicissimus and Novatus at Carthage, or again that of Meletius in Egypt.

Unity of the Episcopate

In face of these attacks, the whole episcopate ranged itself under the leadership of its heads, Cyprian of Carthage, Dionysius of Alexandria, and above all that of the Bishops of Rome, Fabian, Cornelius and Dionysius. Under the pressure of the danger present, the Christian brotherhood tightened its bonds; the bishops who were most jealous of their independence of action nevertheless appealed to a sovereign authority and requested its indispensable intervention. St. Cyprian wrote to St. Stephen: "You should write very plainly to our colleagues in the episcopate in Gaul, that they no longer allow the obstinate and proud Marcion to insult our college."⁹ Thus these painful experiences themselves gave all the members of the Church a more lively consciousness of the unity of its government and the authority of its supreme head.

Doctrinal Controversies

These schisms were often complicated by doctrinal controversies, which made the danger a more serious one. Already at the end of the apostolic age Christianity had to defend itself from the Gnostic heresies; but then, and throughout the second century, those who denied the baptismal faith openly abandoned the Church and founded sects. Towards the end of that century things were no longer the same: the Monarchianists and Adoptionists did not separate themselves from the Church as Marcion or Valentine had done; they claimed the right to remain within it, but to create schools which were in fact heresies. The clearest example of these pretensions is given in the history of Paul of Samosata, who mutilated doctrine at his will, but was determined to remain in the Church, and still more to remain Bishop of Antioch, long after he had already ceased to be a Christian. A first Council failed to evict him; his elusive dialectics were beyond the grasp of his judges and defied their condemnation for four years. Convicted at last of heresy, he was still obstinate, and it was necessary to have recourse to the Emperor Aurelian to expel him from his church. We have

⁹ *Epist.*, lxxviii, 2.

a foretaste here of all the astuteness of the Arians, together with the efforts of Councils, often sterile, and the recourse to the Emperor—a remedy which was to prove even worse than the evil itself.

Influence of Philosophy

In this new attitude on the part of the heretics, we must look for the influence of the religious philosophies of the time, and especially of the Idealist currents which tended to lead to the dissolution of beliefs. The Platonic ideas, which for Plato himself were not only determined in themselves but also the principle of every other determination, were at this time described thus by Apuleius: "These forms, which Plato calls ideas, are incomplete, and formless, being defined by no determination and no precise quality."¹⁰ Under these influences, the Infinite can be regarded only as the Indeterminate; in this mist we lose all the clear and precise forms in which Greek thought took such delight. In many of those who separated from the great Church, the Christian Faith was dissolved into an atmosphere of dreams. Let us read once more, for instance, the strange passage in which, towards the end of the second century, Rhodon, the Catholic master of the Roman School, gives an account of his meeting with Apelles the Marcionite:

Apelles said to me that one ought not to expect a strict examination [of doctrine], but that each one ought to hold on to his faith. He considered, moreover, those who hope in the Crucified One will be saved, provided they are found in good works; he affirmed that for him the most obscure question was the question of God.

Marcion allowed the existence of two principles; other Marcionites distinguished three. Apelles, for his part, recognised only one. Why? asked Rhodon. Apelles gave this reply:

How it is that there is only one principle, I confess I do not know. But I feel myself led to affirm it.¹¹

Those who hold this religious philosophy despair of attaining to truth by reason, but feel drawn to it by instinct. They themselves are satisfied by this sentiment, but it is felt to be incommunicable. They abandon the idea of imposing it upon anyone, or of making orthodoxy a condition of salvation.

¹⁰ *De Platone*, i, 5. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 76.

¹¹ *Apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xiii, 5-7.

Such dispositions of mind were common to all the pagan world at that time. Men of culture had long since recognised the inanity of the common beliefs; they still accepted them, but only as symbols, in which their allegorical exegesis found a whole philosophy of nature.¹² This philosophy itself could take various forms in different thinkers. No one claimed thereby really to grasp the truth; at most one could hope to contemplate some reflections of it. The converts to Christianity who had been formed in this school did not always forget the lessons they had learnt; when they withdrew from the great Church and abandoned its authority, they treated Christian doctrine as they had previously treated the Mythologies or Hellenic philosophies. Thus, the Marcionites imagined two supreme principles, or one, or three, according to their particular religious taste; and in the Valentinian Gnostics imagination allowed itself full scope, giving rise to the æons of the *Ogdoad*, the *Decad*, and the *Dodecad*. Those who had once been charmed by the *Isis and Osiris* of Plutarch, or the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, would find in the Gnostic imaginings a less material form of intoxication in which their dreams would still be coloured by a reflection of Christianity. Certainly they had to renounce the firm assurance of the Christian Faith, but this assurance often appeared to them to be a slavery; the possession of the truth was to profound souls an inestimable treasure, but it was burdensome to more superficial minds who constantly dreamed of fresh enquiries, and whose frivolous curiosity could not long be captivated even by the word of a God. In times of persecution, the prospect of martyrdom roused men's souls from this intoxication, and made them realise, in face of death, the sublime gravity of the Christian Faith. But when the danger was passed, and pagan life, so threatening a little while before, was smiling once more upon its one-time enemies, and offering them merely its benevolent Syncretism, the temptation

¹² This allegorical exegesis is to be found in the Stoic philosophers, e.g. in Zeno and Chrysippus: *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, edited by J. von Arnim (Leipzig, 1903-1905), I (Zenonis), fr. 152-177; II (Chrysippi), fr. 1061-1100. The most interesting general work is the book of Cornutus, *Theologiæ græcæ compendium* (ed. C. Lang, Leipzig, 1881). Cornutus died about 68 A.D. He was therefore a contemporary of St. Paul. This exegesis has been often studied, e.g. by Decharme, *La Critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs*, Paris, 1904, pp. 270-355, and more briefly in Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, pp. 33-43. We know that Porphyry accused Origen of borrowing from the Greeks their allegorical method in order to apply it to the Jewish Scriptures (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xix, 8, quoted above, p. 933).

was great to accept these deceptive imitations, and to regard Christianity as just one religion like the others—higher, no doubt, and purer, but itself capable of change, capable of adapting itself to any alliance, and abandoning that intransigence which no pagan could either tolerate or even understand.

The Faith

In presence of this shallow instability, the Church repeated once more her confession of faith: "We for our part have no need of curiosity after Jesus Christ, nor of research after the Gospel. Once we believe, we have no need to believe anything further. For the first article of our faith is that there is nothing more we ought to believe."¹³

These peremptory declarations were supported by a whole theology concerning the Church and her doctrinal authority. Scripture, Tradition, all the sources of Christian doctrine, belong to the Church; it is the Church that ensures their integrity and interprets their meaning. The teaching she gives is "a precious deposit, enclosed in an excellent vessel; the Spirit constantly rejuvenates it, and communicates its youth to the vessel containing it. . . . For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace; and the Spirit is truth."¹⁴ Every reader must admire the depth and clarity of these theses of Irenæus; but we can better grasp their imperative force when we contrast them with the dissolving sophisms of the Gnostics.

Rationalism

This Christian faith does not consist merely of obedience to the authority of the Church and to God's Revelation; it implies in the first place a love of this religious truth, so dear to Christians that they are ready to die for it. Here again we find a new conflict of ideas between the Church and the world it had to conquer. In Hellenic and Roman circles, so proud of their culture, we find not only an easy-going Syncretism, or a superficial idealism which amuses itself with its dreams; we find also a keen and firm Rational-

¹³ Tertullian, *De præscriptione*, vii, 12-13.

¹⁴ Irenæus, *Adv. hæc.*, III, xxiv, 1, text quoted in Bk. III, p. 678.

ism, for which the Christian mystery can be only a chimera. It is this Rationalism which at the end of the third century underlies the polemics of Porphyry;¹⁵ and throughout this whole century it endeavours to lead Christians astray, and to shake the edifice of its dogma in whole or in part.

We recognise it easily in the Adoptionists refuted by Hippolytus; they are willing to admit only that which can be demonstrated "by a conjunctive or a disjunctive syllogism; leaving aside the holy Scriptures, they apply themselves to geometry"; they put themselves in the school of Euclid, Aristotle, Theophrastus, or Galen; they mutilate the Scriptures under pretext of correcting them; or instead of taking the trouble to falsify them, they completely reject the Law and the Prophets.¹⁶

First Attempts at Biblical Criticism

The Marcionites had blazed the trail in this matter. Marcion indeed does not seem to have been in any way a Rationalist: his fierce and impassioned Christianity claimed to be superior to the faith of the great Church both in elevation and requirements. But by rejecting the Old Testament he had been obliged to criticise it, and this criticism became in him, and still more in his disciples, a school of Rationalism.¹⁷ The method which all these heretics employed against the Old Testament was the same as that which Porphyry was to utilise against the Gospel. Neglecting the religious significance of the facts, they presented them as improbable stories, or if not, as ordinary happenings which they made the subject of their criticism. Despoiled of its divine character, and covered with sarcasm, the Bible became for those who followed them nothing but a collection of myths and legends.

Hence arose, especially in the East and outside the great Church, timid attempts to distinguish in the Pentateuch the divine element from what was merely a human work. Thus Ptolemy, the disciple of Valentine, in his *Letter to Flora*, distinguished in the Law three

¹⁵ Cf. Bk. III, p. 889.

¹⁶ Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxviii, 13-19. Cf. Bk. III, p. 728.

¹⁷ On this Rationalistic criticism of the Old Testament by the Marcionites, see an interesting study by A. Marmorstein, *The Background of the Haggadah*, in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Cincinnati, 1929, pp. 141-204, and, especially pp. 150-183, on anti-Marcionite Apologetics. We have indicated above (p. 969) Origen's reaction against this tendency.

different sources: God, Moses, and the elders; the redactor of the *Clementine Homilies* affirmed that Moses wrote nothing, and that the Law, drawn up after his death by the elders, had been mingled with dangerous additions.¹⁸ Some have regarded these reveries as the first attempts at Biblical Criticism, and these ancient heretics have been looked upon as forerunners. But that is an honour which they do not deserve: their hypotheses were not the results of scientific researches; but merely expedients invented in order to save something of the Old Testament.

If such conjectures were entertained, in spite of the fact that there was nothing either in the Jewish or the Christian tradition which prepared the way for them, it was because the gravity of the danger present was realised, and in the communities which had already separated from the great Church,¹⁹ it was met in any way possible. Towards the year 210, Tertullian wrote: "Nowadays in all countries we have more followers than the Marcionites."²⁰ This numerical preponderance seems to be regarded by him as the end of a process. Hence it would seem that towards the end of the second century the situation had been less favourable, and that, in certain lands at least, the heresy which rejected the whole of the Old Testament had at least as many adherents as Catholic orthodoxy. This striking expansion of Marcionism is shown again by the manifold and persevering efforts of Catholic apologists, comprising the greatest theologians. It has been said that the works of Irenæus were wholly directed against Marcion, and the same might be said of the works of Origen.

The Catholic Resistance

These efforts were not in vain: to Irenæus the Church owes the fruitful conception of the progressive education of humanity, prepared gradually from the time of Adam, through the patriarchs and prophets, for the Incarnation of the Son of God, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and finally for the Vision of God which will be the inheritance of the elect. Origen in his turn showed that the prophets were privileged witnesses of God, who, "after being pre-

¹⁸ On all this, cf. above, p. 1002.

¹⁹ In Catholic circles, these radical criticisms do not appear; nevertheless the distinction we have noticed in the *Didascalia* between the Law and the *Deuterio-*sis would seem to result from the same preoccupations; cf. above, pp. 1003-1004.

²⁰ *Adversus Marcionem*, V, xx. Cf. Harnack, *Marcion*, p. 206.

pared thereto by figures, arrived at the contemplation of the truth.”²¹

The method of allegorical exegesis to which this led in Alexandria doubtless had its exaggerations, but it rendered services which we must not overlook: it turned away men's minds from the rationalistic literalism of the Jews, and above all of the Marcionites.²²

§ 2. THE LACK OF HARMONY BETWEEN THE POPULAR FAITH AND LEARNED THEOLOGY¹

In the various conflicts we have just described, we have witnessed the victorious reaction of the Church in face of attacks and invasion by pagan life and thought. But we must now consider a danger, less grave in appearance, but yet very real, which arose in the third century through the lack of harmony we have several times mentioned between popular faith and learned theology. We shall do well to consider this once again, and study its origin and bearing.

The Requirements of the Elite

The problem we are considering here is one which presents itself at all times. In the third century it was rendered more dangerous by the rapid expansion of the Church in the pagan world. The new recruits who flocked to her in such great numbers had been accustomed in the pagan religions to progressive initiations which separated the *élite* from the masses. In Greco-Roman paganism, the old myths were interpreted by philosophers as allegorical symbols of their own doctrines; the mystery religions led their disciples step by step to the last degree in which they were permitted to witness the secret rites. Gnosticism, in its various

²¹ In *Joann.*, VI, iii, 15. Cf. Zoellig, *Die Inspirationslehre des Origenes*, pp. 44-48. As so often happens in Origen, this admiration for the prophets is sometimes carried to extremes: the prophets are represented as incarnate angels: In *Mt.*, xii, 30; cf. Huet, in his note on this passage, and *Origeniana*, II, ii, 5, 24.

²² Cf. above, p. 969.

¹ We have studied this lack of harmony in more detail in the *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique*, Vols. XIX and XX, 1923 and 1924, pp. 481-505 and 5-37. Some points in the present chapter are taken from these articles, and others from an article published in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XII, 1922, pp. 265-296, on *Les degrés de la connaissance religieuse, d'après Origène*.

forms, was conceived according to the same plan: over and above the elements common to religion it added secret revelations introducing a few privileged souls to profound secrets which the common folk would never know.

The new converts to Christianity had experienced the attraction of such dreams; they had abjured the illusions of their paganism or Gnosticism; but instinctively many of them sought from the Church what they had always sought elsewhere: a religious knowledge worthy of their secular knowledge. Was this a claim resulting from pride, or a legitimate ambition? That was the great problem which Origen discussed in the Preface to his fifth tome on *St. John*. Addressing himself to his friend Ambrose, who had formerly fallen away into Gnosticism, he reminds him of the seduction which had then led him astray. This was not just intellectual ambition alone, but still more "the love of Jesus, which cannot suffer an unreasoned and vulgar faith."²

Mistrust of Learning by the Simple

But while some particular minds felt this need and made such claims upon theologians, simple folk often became alarmed, seeing in all this knowledge nothing but idle words and in all these researches merely temerity.³ We must not be too hard on their timidity, and we must bear in mind that every day they saw Gnosticism erecting some new construction, which soon collapsed with a great noise. Alarmed at these ruins, in which souls were perishing, many drew away, repeating that "one ought not to get mixed up either with philosophy or with dialectics, nor even to apply oneself to the study of the universe; what they aimed at was just the faith, pure and simple."⁴

Attitude of St. Irenæus

Tertullian expressed these sentiments in his sonorous and imperious language, but his exaggeration led him to miss the mark by

² *In Joann.*, v, 8. This text has been quoted above, p. 934.

³ Origen often complains of this, as does Clement. He writes thus in a homily on the *Psalms*: "Amongst other faults, the ignorant have this detestable one that they regard as vain and useless those who apply themselves to the ministry of the word and of teaching; they esteem their own ignorance more than the study and labours of masters, and altering the value of words, they call these exercises in verbiage, and they call their own uncultivated ignorance simplicity" (*In Psalm.*, xxxvi, hom., v, 1).

⁴ Clement, *Stromata*, I, ix, 43, 1.

overshooting it.⁵ St. Irenæus was wiser when he first reminded those theologians who had no patience with research, of the inviolable unity of the Christian Faith, and then revealed to them an immense field of studies, namely, all the depth of the riches of the knowledge and the wisdom of God, which St. Paul never wearied of contemplating, and to which he had directed his disciples.⁶ These problems were never regarded by St. Irenæus as matters of ambitious speculation such as those which aroused the curiosity of the Gnostics; they were religious mysteries, which God has revealed to man through love, and which are perceived only by man when he is raised up towards God by charity.⁷ Thus, considering Christian theology as a whole in its relations with charity, Irenæus writes:

It is better to know nothing and to be ignorant of the cause of all that exists, provided one believes in God and perseveres in his love, rather than to be puffed up by this knowledge and fall away from this love which makes us live; it is better to leave all other scientific research and know only Jesus Christ, the Son of God crucified for us, rather than be led into impiety by subtleties and details of questions.⁸

Every Christian, if the question be put in this way, would answer it as does Irenæus, putting in the first rank of Christians the simple believers who know only Jesus Christ and him crucified. But the theologians of Alexandria put the question in quite another way, and accordingly give a different answer.

Different Attitude of Clement of Alexandria

At Alexandria, in fact, we find a diversity of tendencies still more than in the West: high speculations seem to the simple to be a temerarious enterprise, while the theologians for their part are inclined to regard the faith of the simple as insufficient for one who aims at Christian perfection.

To understand this properly, we must remember what it is that distinguished the Alexandrine "gnosis," as found in Catholics like

⁵ *De præscriptione*, vii and xii. Cf. Bk. III, p. 826.

⁶ *Adversus hæreses*, I, x, 2-3. Cf. Bk. III, pp. 668-669.

⁷ On the theory of religious knowledge according to St. Irenæus, cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 534-539.

⁸ *Adversus hæreses*, II, xxvi, 1. This passage, the conclusion of which alone is recalled here, has been quoted in Bk. III, p. 673.

Clement and Origen, from theological speculation as we find it for instance in Tertullian, Hippolytus or Novatian. This Alexandrine gnosis is not a purely human science, born of the efforts of the theologian; it is a higher religious knowledge, an intuition which initiates the one who enjoys it into mysteries forbidden to the masses; it transforms his moral and religious life, draws him out of the servile condition common to all other men, and makes him a privileged friend of God, equal or even superior to the angels.

Such pretensions wounded simple Christians in that which was most dear to them; they might agree that they were less learned than their masters, but not that they were to be held at a distance, as Christians of a second order, relegated, throughout their lifetime and perhaps also for eternity, far from Christ and far from God. On the other hand, the "gnostics" who found their privilege contested, were indignant that any should seek to take from them not only the prestige of human science, but also the intimacy of special revelations.

These ideas and the conflicts to which they gave rise can already be perceived in the few fragments which we possess of Clement's predecessors. Here we find the opposition between the gnostics and the believers:

I know that the mysteries of gnosis lead to pleasantries on the part of the majority of people, especially when they are not covered by a learned symbolism; but for some, on the other hand, they are as a light which is suddenly introduced in the midst of a banquet in a dark room: first it dazzles them, then they become accustomed to it, then they conform themselves to it, and exercise themselves in it, trembling and exulting with joy [they praise?] ⁹ the Lord.¹⁰

⁹ There is a word missing here.

¹⁰ *Eclog.*, 35. These fragments have been studied especially by P. Collomp, *Une source de Clement d'Alexandrie et des homélies pseudo-clémentines*, in *Revue de Philologie*, Vol. XXXVII, 1913, pp. 19-46, and in more detail by Bousset, *Judisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom*, pp. 155-271. The *Excerpta ex Theodoto* have been edited and commented with great care by R. P. Casey, London, 1934. The comparison made here between this revelation and a sudden illumination is inspired by the mysteries, and is often found at that time, e.g. in Apuleius, *De deo Socratis*: "It is, in the midst of the most profound darkness, the instantaneous brilliance of a strong light." Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 79 and 30. In the fragments close to the one quoted above, other traces of this gnosticism are to be found, and especially in *Eclogæ*, 27; cf. *Excerpta*, 27. These passages are quoted in the *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, art. cit., pp. 493-495.

These mutilated texts, gathered more or less by chance from Clement's notes, do not determine with certitude the position of his predecessors; but at least they give us some idea of it, and further, the fact of their insertion in these collections shows the interest which Clement took in them himself.¹¹ At the same time, the master of the Catechetical School did not give himself up unreservedly to these gnostic aspirations, the danger of which he recognised. In the first five *Stromata* and in the *Pædagogus*, this reserve is particularly noticeable: Gnosis is praised, but as a perfection to which all the faithful can and ought to attain; faith already contains its seed, and one can therefore say that already from the time of his baptism a Christian is perfect.¹² But when Clement was persecuted under Severus and had to leave Alexandria and his school, he allowed himself to be led by his aspirations to a life free from passion, fixed in a perpetual contemplation, and raised above the common level of humanity. It is then that we find once more in his works, and sometimes not without exaggeration and bitterness, the opposition between the believer and the gnostic: the one grasps only the letter of religion, the other the spirit; the former reaches the symbols, but the latter the realities.¹³ The source of this privileged knowledge is sometimes represented as a secret tradition entrusted by Christ to the apostles and transmitted by them to certain privileged persons.¹⁴ The initiates, or "gnostics," aware that they possess religious truths to which ordinary people cannot attain, will adopt towards them an attitude of condescension, accommodating themselves to their customs, and performing symbolical actions which are unnecessary for themselves, though necessary for the others. This is the lesson which, according to Clement, we learn from the conduct of St. Paul, who became all things to all men and circumcised Timothy.¹⁵ We shall find the same theory in Origen, confirmed by the same examples.

To this privileged Christian, who has passed by a second conversion from faith to gnosis,¹⁶ is attributed by Clement all the perfections which the Stoics gave to their wise man. He possesses

¹¹ On the Valentinian doctrine and Clement's theology as shown in these collections of notes, cf. R. P. Casey, *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, especially pp. 5-38.

¹² *Pædagogus*, I, xxv and xxvi, cf. Bk. III, p. 903.

¹³ *Strom.*, VI, xv, 131-132.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, VI, vii, 61, 1; *Hypotyposes*, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, II, 1, Cf. Bk. III, p. 918.

¹⁵ *Strom.*, VI, xv, 124; VII, ix, 53.

¹⁶ On this second conversion, cf. Bk. III, p. 919.

perfect knowledge and virtue, he knows all things, attains to all things and understands all things. Every one of his actions is rectitude itself; he no longer has any passion; transfigured into God he prays to him without ceasing; his life is a perpetual festival. He is an apostle, he is a priest, he belongs not only to the *élite*, but to the real hierarchy of the Church.¹⁷

The life of eternity will consecrate this transcendent and isolated perfection: in heaven as on earth, the gnostic and the believer are separated; they do not belong to the same flock and do not live in the same dwelling. Here below, every action of a "gnostic" is perfect, and every action of a believer intermediate;¹⁸ similarly in the next world "the fact that one is simply saved is one of the intermediate things, to be saved as one ought to be is perfection," to which the "gnostic" alone attains. For the believer, his consciousness of his inferior beatitude will be an eternal pain, and the severest of all.¹⁹

Lastly, we notice in this mysticism of Clement a total absence of suffering or of purifying trials. In this respect again it resembles neo-Platonism, and in particular, the mysticism of Plotinus. Prayer itself certainly develops in the life of the "gnostic," but it appears little or not at all in its preparation. It seems that one is raised to this life by ascetical effort and dialectics.²⁰ Certainly these features

¹⁷ *Strom.*, VI, viii, 65-68, 70-79; VII, x, 55-59.

¹⁸ This distinction is based on the Stoic classification of moral values: the action of the just man is perfectly right; that of the wicked man is evil; between the two we have the action of the ordinary man who carries out his duty, and this is called "intermediate": Cicero, *Acad. post.*, I, xxxvii; *De finibus*, III, lviii; IV, lvi; cf. J. von Arnim, *Stoicorum fragmenta*, Vol. I, p. 55; Vol. III, pp. 134 et seq.

¹⁹ *Strom.*, VI, xiv, 108-114; cf. Bk. III, p. 919. This theory of the heavenly dwellings, divided from one another by an abyss, is found again in other passages in Clement: *Strom.*, IV, xv-xviii, 97-114; VII, x, 55-59.

²⁰ This effort is thus described in a passage in which the stages of the mystical ascent are likened to the initiations into the Mysteries: "Not unreasonably the Mysteries begin among the Greeks with lustrations, as among the barbarians by a bath; then there are the lesser Mysteries, which have the character of an instruction, a preparation for what is to come next; in the great Mysteries, which are concerned with the whole universe, there is nothing more to learn, but one has to behold and comprehend nature and reality. For us, lustration is confession; the witnessing of the final ceremony is the analysis by which we advance towards the First Intelligence, starting with the analysis of the being subordinated to it, disengaging bodies from their natural properties, taking out the dimension of depth, then that of breadth, and then that of length; what remains is, so to speak, a monad, occupying a certain place, if we suppress this place, we have the Intelligible Monad. If then, separating from bodies and from things called

are not the only ones: an important place is given to Christ as revealer and master, and this is sufficient to make us recognise that this mysticism is authentically Christian, and not merely Hellenic in character. Even so, this Christian character is strongly impregnated by a proud Hellenism which is not very evangelical. We are far removed from St. Paul, who asks: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?";²¹ we are far from Christ, for Jesus thanked his Father because he had hidden his secrets from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them to little ones.²² According to Clement, on the contrary, it is to the wise and prudent that Christ has revealed them.²³

Origen

In Origen we find the same aspirations as in Clement, the same intense desire for contemplation and knowledge,²⁴ together with the same impatience with the inadequacies and narrowness of an ignorant faith. But in Origen these aspirations are more under control: Clement was still a philosopher even when he became a Christian and a priest; Origen was born a Christian and was the son of a martyr; he devoted his whole life to the study of the Scriptures; he was before all a churchman, an exegete; his preaching, which was always assiduous and towards the end of his life a daily event, kept him in contact with the Christian populace. These constant and profound influences prevented him from isolating himself in his ivory tower and giving himself up there to a dream of a peaceful life, free from all human infirmities and separated from the world and its miseries. But on the other hand, his bold and occasionally rash speculations attacked Christian doctrine more directly, inasmuch as that doctrine was more continuously present

incorporeal all the qualities which inhere in them, we precipitate ourselves into the greatness of Christ, and then by sanctity advance into the abyss, we shall arrive in some way at the understanding of the Almighty, understanding not what he is, but what he is not" (*Strom.*, V, xi, 70, 7).

²¹ *I Cor.* i, 20.

²² *Matt.* xi, 25.

²³ *Strom.*, VI, xv, 115, 1.

²⁴ Among the many texts, we may quote this comment on *Psalms* xxvi, 6: "As long as I am on earth, says the psalmist, if I must renounce many goods, I make at least one request. For as it is impossible to enjoy all goods in abundance, at least let this good be not lacking to me, this great and excellent good which I see."

to his thought. We have already set forth his speculations, their attractiveness and their danger, and we need not return to them here. We wish merely to show how Origen understood the reciprocal relations between learned theology and the popular faith.

The faith of the simple has as its central object Jesus Christ crucified. That is certainly a salutary knowledge, but it is elementary; it is the "milk for babes"; the mercy of God sets it forth, in the absence of something better, to those who are still too weak to ascend higher and "know God in the wisdom of God."²⁵ Accordingly, we are not surprised to find Origen, in another passage in the *Contra Celsum*, defending this faith of the simple as being, not absolutely the best, but the best possible, in view of the weakness of those to whom it has to be proposed. He grants that some favoured minds may not be satisfied with it, but these can pass beyond it and ascend higher, without going outside Christianity.²⁶

Accordingly, he severely criticises Celsus for claiming "to know everything" about Christianity, whereas he has grasped only the elements. We might just as well think we understand the religion of the Egyptians because we have heard the myths narrated by the common people, though we have never met an Egyptian priest or received from him an initiation into the mysteries. Origen adds:

What I have said of the Egyptians, their wise men and their ignorant people, might also be said of the Persians. With them also, there are initiations which are interpreted reasonably by the learned among them, and carried out symbolically by the common folk. Again we might say the same of the Syrians, Indians, and all those who possess myths and sacred books.²⁷

²⁵ As often happens in Origen, an association of ideas was formed in his mind between the text of St. Paul concerning Jesus Christ crucified, and the elementary catechism, just as he accustomed himself to regard the Corinthians as the type of ordinary Christians: *In Joannem*, I, vii, 43; I, ix, 58; I, xviii, 107; II, iii, 29; II, iii, 33; XIX, xi, 68; *Contra Celsum*, II, lxvi; *Periarchon*, IV, iv, 31.

²⁶ *Contra Celsum*, III, lxxix. This text has been quoted and commented on above, p. 965, n. 44.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, I, xii. It would be a serious error and a grave injustice to Origen to accuse him, on the basis of this text, of having attributed to all these initiations the same truth: the faith of the simple contains nothing that is not true (*Contra Celsum*, III, lxxix; cf. *supra*, p. 965), and in this way it differs from all these superstitions which he abhors; but even so he finds one feature common to Christianity and the pagan Mysteries: the progressive initiations by which Christians, like the disciples of the pagan religions, must advance step by step until they arrive at an intimate knowledge of their Mysteries.

His Theological Position

This apologetic reasoning already makes known the theological position of Origen. We find it set forth in greater detail in his *Commentary on St. John*: beyond the knowledge which the ordinary Christian possesses, there is a privileged initiation, to which only the few chosen ones can aspire:

Just as the Law set forth the shadow of the future good things which were to be manifested by that Law which is announced in truth, so also the Gospel, which ordinary people think they understand, teaches the shadow of the mysteries of Christ. But the eternal Gospel, of which John speaks, and which may properly be called the spiritual Gospel, presents clearly, to those who understand, all that concerns the Son of God and the mysteries revealed in his discourses, and the realities of which his actions were the symbols.²⁸

These distinctions appear with particular clearness in our knowledge of the Word of God: ordinary Christians see only his humiliations; but the spiritual ones contemplate his divine glory. Hence we have this distinction between classes of men: in the first rank we have those "who participate in the Logos who was from the beginning, who was with God, the Logos God"; in the second rank we have those "who know only Jesus Christ and him crucified, thinking that the Logos made flesh is the whole of the Logos; they know Christ only according to the flesh; such are the masses of those regarded as believers."²⁹ Or, as is said elsewhere, "the Logos, for those who are still in the stage of preparatory teaching, has the form of a servant, so that they may say: 'We have seen him, and he has neither form nor beauty'; while for the perfect, he comes in the glory of his Father, and they may say: 'We have seen his glory, the glory such as an only son receives from his father, full of grace and truth'; and this cannot be understood by one who has need of the folly of preaching in order to believe."³⁰

This gradation of revelations and beliefs is not without danger: it lowers the mystery of the Cross, and compromises the unity of Christian people. The perfect, the "true adorers," become isolated

²⁸ *In Joannem*, I, vii, 43.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, II, iii, 27-31. Origen adds two other categories: in the third rank we have the Greek philosophers; in the fourth, "those who have given belief to wholly corrupting and atheistic discourses."

³⁰ *In Mt.*, xii, 30.

in the Church in the midst of the simple folk, the "Jews" or "people of Jerusalem";³¹ applying to themselves, not without conceit, the tactics of St. Paul, they "become Jews to win the Jews," they lend themselves to symbolical actions to deliver those who are subject to symbols."³² The aim is excellent, but the method is dangerous; there is room to fear on the one hand a disdain which is too similar to pharisaism, and on the other, a condescension which tends to be insincere. We get the same impression in reading this other passage:

Peter and Paul, who at first were plainly Jews and circumcised, afterwards received from Jesus the grace to be such in secret.³³ They were Jews ostensibly for the salvation of the majority; not only did they confess it by their words, but they also manifested it by their actions. We must say the same of their Christianity. And just as Paul could not assist the Jews according to the flesh, unless, when it was reasonable, he cut his hair and made his offering—unless in other words he became a Jew for the sake of the Jews, in order to gain the Jews—so also he who devotes himself to the salvation of many cannot give efficacious help by secret Christianity to those who are still in the elements of ordinary Christianity, or make them better, or lead them to what is more perfect and higher. Hence Christianity must be both spiritual and corporal; and when we have to announce the corporal Gospel and say that we know nothing amongst the carnal save Jesus Christ and him crucified, we must do so. But when we find them perfected by the Spirit and bearing in themselves fruit, and in love with heavenly wisdom, we must communicate to them the discourse which ascends from the Incarnation to that which was with God.³⁴

³¹ "Those who, by their moral dispositions, have become equal to the angels, will not adore the Father in Jerusalem, but they will adore better than those of Jerusalem although, because of the latter, they have to live among those of Jerusalem, having become Jews for the Jews in order to gain the Jews. When someone no longer adores either on the mountain, or at Jerusalem, the hour has at last come when he has become a son, and adores the Father in freedom" (*In Joann.*, XIII, xvi, 98).

³² "It may happen that the true adorer, he who adores in spirit and in truth, may lend himself to symbolical actions, in order gently to deliver those who are subject to symbols, and enable them to pass from symbols to the truth. Paul seems to have acted in this way in the case of Timothy, and perhaps also at Cenchræ and Jerusalem" (*Ibid.*, xviii, 109-111).

³³ Origen here is alluding to *Rom.* ii, 29. This text, the sense of which incidentally he falsifies, is one of those he quotes most frequently in support of his theory of a higher and secret Christianity. *In Joann.*, I, i, 1; I, xxv, 259; XIII, xvii, 103; *Fragm.*, 8 and 114; *Periarch.*, IV, iii, 6; IV, ii, 5; *In Jerem. hom.*, xii, 12; *Contra Celsum*, VII, xxii.

³⁴ *In Joann.*, I, vii, 43.

Though Paul, out of condescension to the weakness of the Corinthians, preached to them only ordinary Christianity, Jesus Christ and him crucified, he revealed more divine mysteries to more worthy disciples. Origen thus often contrasts the Corinthians with the Ephesians: the former are for him the type of ordinary Christians, while the latter are the spiritual ones. And superior even to the Ephesians, there were certain chosen disciples who were capable of supporting the weight of the highest revelations, such as Timothy and Luke, to whom, according to Origen, Paul communicated the unspeakable words which he heard when he was caught up to the third heaven.³⁵

In virtue of this hypothesis, some doctrines were introduced into the Church which the official tradition has always repudiated, and in particular, belief in reincarnation and in the transmigration of souls. Clement had rejected this, but Origen accepted it; he presented it as a doctrine reserved for perfect Christians, revealed to them by allegory under the letter of Scripture.³⁶

This conception of allegory is characteristic of Alexandria: we find it already in Philo;³⁷ it is asserted in Clement, and developed in Origen. Other writers of the school, Clement for instance, Gregory

³⁵ In *Josue hom.*, xxiii, 4. This passage has been quoted above, p. 962.

³⁶ In *Joann.*, XX, vii, 50-53; XIX, xiii-xiv, 79-88; In *Ephes.*, i, 17 (ed. J. A. F. Gregg, in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. III, p. 399); vi, 13 (*ibid.*, p. 572; cf. In *Luc. hom.*, XXIII).

³⁷ E. Bréhier (*Les Idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie*, pp. 39-41) shows how the Alexandrians—first the neo-Pythagoricians, and then Philo—transformed the nature of allegory. For them it was no longer only an auxiliary method, but an indispensable instrument in the search for the truth; we understand how, in this view, religious truth has to be hidden under symbols, and is revealed only to a few privileged souls, either by initiation into the Mysteries, or by allegory. "The comparing of the allegorical initiation with initiation into the Mysteries, though not frequent, is found in Philo, as in the Cebes tableau. His very conception of truth as hidden beneath allegory is not without relation to that of the Mysteries. Truth must be communicated only to a small number, and with precautions; the ears of the profane would not be able to contain it. The wise man must therefore not unveil the truth to all, but he will dissemble, out of piety and humanity. Those who are not willing to allow the allegorical method are not only fools, but also impious." M. Bréhier mentions the following texts: *De Cherubim*, xlvi; *De sacr. Abel et Cain*, lxxi; *Quæst. in Gen.*, IV, xlvii, 299; cxiii, 341; clxviii, 374; *De mut. nom.*, lx, lxi, lxii. All these features, with the exception of deceiving, are found also in Origen: he likewise regards allegory as an initiation into the highest religious truths; for him also the opponents of the allegorical method are not merely short-sighted exegetes who do not properly understand the Scripture, but also impious people who mutilate the Christian religion.

Thaumaturgus or Dionysius of Alexandria, are less dependent upon the Scriptures, and develop more freely their own metaphysical speculations. Allegory is less indispensable for them; Origen, however, is and wishes to be, above all, an exegete; it is in Scripture that he finds all truth; to discover it there, he requires this mystic key;³⁸ hence those who try to take Scripture from his hands are impious; he speaks in indignant tones about them, and in his words we have not only an exegete defending his method, but above all a religious mind protecting what is most sacred to it.³⁹

The Question of Prayer

These aspirations towards a higher and purer religion reserved for a select few differentiate, as we have seen, the speculations of theologians from the faith of the simple, opposing an allegorical to the literal exegesis; on prayer likewise these aspirations leave their impress.

Christ by his example and precepts taught his apostles to pray to the heavenly Father; he also prescribed to them prayer in his own name. The Church has remained faithful to this divine institution: liturgical prayer is addressed usually to the Father through the Son; she thus worships the heavenly Father, source and principle of all good, and the Son, our Saviour and Mediator. But even so, the Church does not hesitate to offer to the Father and to the Son the same prayer, the same adoration, and the same worship, either by uniting the two Persons (or the three) in a common formula, or else by addressing the Son alone in the same terms she uses when addressing the Father. These prayers and hymns appear from the beginning of the Church, and have always remained in use.

³⁸ Cf. Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Discourse of Thanksgiving*, xv, 176-178; *Letter from Origen to Gregory*, iv; *Scholia xx on the Apocalypse*, ed. Harnack, p. 29.

³⁹ For instance, in his first *Homily on Leviticus*, after objecting to the literal school that if we listen to them, we would have to offer sacrifices, immolate oxen and lambs, he continues: "But it is time for us to apply against these impious old men (*impious presbyteros*) the words of St. Suzanna . . . : 'I am straightened on every side, for if I do this thing it is death to me, and if I do it not, I shall not escape your hands. But it is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.' We will expose ourselves, then, if it be necessary, to your attacks, but only in order that the Church, turning towards Christ the Lord, may recognise the truth of the word of God hidden beneath the veil of the letter." We see that fidelity to the allegorical interpretation is for Origen a religious duty of supreme importance, a question of life or death.

Though rare in the official liturgy, they are very frequent in the daily hymns and prayers of Christians, in preaching, and especially in the Acts of the martyrs, beginning with the martyrdom of St. Stephen immediately after the death of Jesus.⁴⁰

Origen was aware of this custom of the faithful, but he condemned it in his treatise *On Prayer*: "In their excessive simplicity, some foolishly err, for want of consideration and attention: they pray to the Son either with the Father or without the Father."⁴¹ The argument he brings forward against this practice is that "if we wish to pray well, we must not pray to him who himself prays." This argument is far reaching: in his books against Celsus Origen invokes it in order to condemn the worship of the stars;⁴² here he uses it to condemn prayers addressed to Christ. In both cases the aim is the same, to reserve supreme worship to the supreme God. Accordingly, Origen considers the objection based on the text: "let all the angels of God adore him." He allows that this refers to Christ, but at the same time he maintains that this adoration must not be understood in the proper but in a metaphorical sense, like the adoration of the Church or of Jerusalem in the text of Isaias he goes on to mention.⁴³ His whole aim is to show that the Son of God gives worship to his Father, and that, accordingly, our adoration should not be directed to Christ, but through him to his Father.⁴⁴ And if the Son of God gives worship to the Father, this is not only because he has become man: Origen represents the Word of God and the Holy Spirit as giving a cult of adoration to God the Father in heaven; they are, according to him, allegorically figured by the two animals of Habacuc, and by the two seraphim of Isaias which sing: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.⁴⁵ Philo had seen in these two angels the two supreme powers;⁴⁶ Origen transfers this

⁴⁰ Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 174-247.

⁴¹ *Treatise on Prayer*, xv-xvi. Cf. *Revue d'histoire ecclési.*, Vol. XX, 1924, pp. 19-24; G. Bardy, *La Vie spirituelle d'après les Pères des trois premiers siècles*, Paris, 1935, pp. 254-255.

⁴² *Contra Celsum*, V, xi. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴³ *Treatise on Prayer*, xv, 3.

⁴⁴ It is in the same sense that he says in the text of *Contra Celsum* mentioned above: "We think that the sun and the moon and the other stars pray to the supreme God through his Son, and we consider in consequence that one ought not to pray to them, for they themselves pray."

⁴⁵ *Periarchon*, I, iii, 4; *In Isaiam hom.*, i, 2.

⁴⁶ Previous to Origen, we find this adoration of the Father by the Lord and the "angel of the Spirit" in the *Ascension of Isaias*, ix. This chapter was written by a Christian about the year 150. Here again we recognise the influence of a

interpretation to the Son and the Holy Spirit: that is because he is here still under the influence of Alexandrian Judaism, and is adopting its conception of intermediate cults.⁴⁷ The subordinationist theology of Origen will in its turn have its influence on some Eastern liturgical texts of the fourth century, and particularly on the *Apostolic Constitutions*.⁴⁸

This influence, indeed, will not be able to stop the irresistible current of adoration and prayer which carries Christians towards Christ; Origen himself, who was so profoundly Christian, was carried along by the stream; in his homilies especially, in contact with the Christian people, he prays with them and as they do; his theological speculation shows itself sometimes by the hesitation it suggests, but this hesitation is overcome by a stronger power.⁴⁹ Thus, he gives us this commentary on the precept of charity:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and thy whole soul, and with all thy might. Someone may say to me: ". . . I want to love Christ; teach me how I ought to love him. For if I love him with my whole heart, and my whole soul, and all my might, I shall go against the precept which allows me to love only God thus. But if I love him less than the Father almighty, I fear I shall commit some impiety towards the Firstborn of all creation. Teach me, then, and show me how I can avoid this twofold danger, and how I ought to love Christ."—You wish to know with what love you should love Christ? I will answer you in one word: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God in Christ. Do you think you can love the Father and Christ with a different love? Love the Lord Christ at the same time. Love the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength. If one should still say to me: "Prove by the Scriptures what you have just said," let him listen to the Apostle Paul, who knew how we ought to love. "I am certain," he says, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to sepa-

Judaising Gnosticism; cf. the note by Cardinal Tisserant in his edition of the *Ascension of Isaias*, pp. 13 and 190.

⁴⁷ *De vita Mosis*, iii, 8.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, art. cit., pp. 26-33; *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, pp. 631-634, on the traces of subordinationist tendency in prayer and worship.

⁴⁹ This opposition between Origen's theory and practice has been brought out more than once, e.g. by Huet, *Origeniana* (Migne, P.G., Vol. XVII, 795), and by Loofs, *Leitfaden zur Dogmengeschichte*, p. 195.

rate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Saviour, to whom be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen." ⁵⁰

These hesitations on the part of Origen, and this disagreement between his theological speculations and the religious practice of his faith, show us in him the twofold current we have distinguished in the Christian Church of his time, while at the same time we see the benefit which both theologians and people derive from a close collaboration. The believer has need of the theologian, that he may the better understand his faith and also that he may defend it against the calumnies or misunderstandings of opponents; indeed, control by the theologian is indispensable for the believer; the popular beliefs must be judged, and if need be corrected and purified by theology. But on his side, the simple believer puts to a test the speculations of the theologian; if in the explanation of a fundamental dogma like that of the Trinity the theologian cannot set forth his ideas without scandalising the faithful, to use Tertullian's phrase, this is a very bad sign, and he will try in vain to discount their testimony by saying that the mass of believers are only "stupid and ignorant," *imprudentes et idiotæ*.⁵¹ St. Paulinus of Nola will later on say with more justice: "We must have regard, as a rule, to the words of all the faithful people, for in every believer we recognise the action of the Holy Spirit." ⁵²

⁵⁰ In *Luc. hom.*, xxv. In the *Contra Celsum*, the question whether worship is to be given to God alone or also to the Son of God is discussed at length; it is in fact one of the main points of the controversy. For Celsus, to associate Jesus with supreme worship is to do what pagan polytheism is accused of doing: it involves the lowering of the divine greatness by an apotheosis similar to those so frequent in paganism. To this accusation Origen gives several answers: he affirms the pre-existence of the Son of God, in order to show that it is not a case of apotheosis, but of the adoration of an eternal divine person. He shows that the whole greatness of the Son comes from the Father, and that it is as such that he is venerated. Lastly—and this is the vulnerable point—he stresses the subordination of the Son in respect to the Father: from the point of view of worship, he describes the Son as the high priest who presents our prayers to God. Is this function derived from the Incarnation? It would seem not; rather it belongs, in Origen as in Philo, to the Logos precisely as such. The main texts of the *Contra Celsum* concerning this question are: V, iv, xiv; VII, lvii; VIII, i, xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xxvi, lxvii, lxix.

⁵¹ In his *Adversus Praxean*, iii, Tertullian complains of the scandal taken by the faithful at his Trinitarian theology. We must not infer from this that the mass of the simple believers had then been won to Monarchianism, but rather that they regarded with suspicion the "economy" which was being preached to them, and we must admit that they had reason to be alarmed.

⁵² *Epist.*, xiii, 25.

Authority of the Church

Above the theologians and the faithful there is the authority of the Church, the supreme judge of all conflicts. This has appeared to us, with a decisive force, in the decision of the Council of Antioch condemning Paul of Samosata, and still more in the dogmatic letter of Pope Dionysius. But in the course of the third century these interventions were rare; many disagreements were settled by colloquies,⁵⁸ while others were resolved merely by the exposition of the Christian faith. In all these cases we find the efficacious character of the fraternal collaboration of all Christians who, moved by the same Spirit and nourished by the same traditions, concurred in preserving the sacred deposit.

The great theologians of the third century, whose activity and teaching we have set forth, including even those who fell into error, as we have had to point out, were not just isolated thinkers, but leaders of the Christian people. This can be said of Clement of Alexandria, the head of the Catechetical School, who was priest, and even in his exile an active servant of the Church, and we must say the same above all of Origen, St. Dionysius of Alexandria, and St. Gregory Thaumaturgus. The last mentioned, especially, is an admirable model both of theological studies and of missionary activity; of all the disciples of Origen there is no other who gave himself up with such great devotion and success to the propagation of the Christian faith, nor one who kept the deposit with greater purity.

On the borders of the Church, disowned by her and yet endeavouring to remain in her bosom, some heretical theologians carried on, at their own risk, their dangerous speculations, or mutilated dogma through their rationalist negations, but the faithful were not easily shaken by these temerities, and if later on they were to be led astray by the seduction of Arianism, it was because this error would at first be hidden under the mask of traditional language. "The Arianism of the fourth century," says Newman, "was not a popular heresy. The laity, as a whole, revolted from it in every

⁵⁸ It was in this way that Origen succeeded in rescuing from Monarchianism Beryllus, Bishop of Bostra, and to bring back to the truth those who in Arabia denied the immortality of the soul (cf. *supra*, p. 984). In the same way, Dionysius dissipated the illusions of the Millenarianists of Arsinoe (cf. *supra*, p. 1026).

part of Christendom. It was an epidemic of the schools and of theologians, and to them it was mainly confined." ⁵⁴

Discord between the Schools and the Christian People

But if this Arian epidemic was able to spread in the schools, it was because these schools were too isolated from the Christian people; in this respect the history we have been examining enables us to understand better the great crisis of the fourth century. In explaining the origin of Arianism, scholars have often mentioned the Subordinationist theology of a great number of writers of the first three centuries. They are right to do so, but only on condition that we clearly indicate the profound opposition separating this Subordinationism from the theories of Arius. The ante-Nicene writers, as a whole, profess that the Son of God is not a creature, but that he came forth from the very essence of the Father, and this constitutes a contradiction of the fundamental principle of Arianism. If, instead of considering the doctrines held by these theologians, we study the position they occupy in the Church, and especially their relations with the simple faithful, we notice, first of all at Alexandria and then especially at Antioch, an abnormal and dangerous situation. We find Collucianists closely linked together, depending on their master Lucian of Antioch, the learned but isolated priest who, before ending his life by martyrdom, had lived for nearly thirty years (275-302) outside the Church under the three episcopates of Domnus, Timæus and Cyril. The school friends from whom Arius will seek support are named by Philostorgius: they are Eusebius of Nicomedia, Maris of Chalcedon, Theognis of Nicomedia, Leontius of Antioch, Antony of Tarsus, and Asterius of Cappadocia. These men certainly have little resemblance with Origen's friends: Alexander of Jerusalem, Gregory

⁵⁴ *Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical*, pp. 143-144. Newman had enunciated the same thesis, and set it forth in somewhat more detail, in the fifth Appendix to his book, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, pp. 445-468. St. Hilary had already noticed this feature of the Arianism of that time, which was the heresy of a group of theologians concealing their error under ambiguous formulæ: "The dissimulation of these impious men is such that Christ's people may live under bishops of Antichrist; they think that their belief is in conformity with the words which cover it. They hear it said that Christ is God; they believe that he is what he is said to be; they hear the Son of God spoken of; they believe that in this divine generation there is divine truth. They hear it said that he was born before time; they think that this signifies that he is eternal. The ears of the people are more holy than the hearts of the bishops" (*Contra Auxentius*, vi).

Thaumaturgus and the others are not really connected with the illustrious master any more than Arius himself. But we cannot deny the analogy presented by the situation of these two groups of men, isolated by their science, their scholastic traditions, and by the suspicions which they aroused.

What differentiates these two groups is that Origen and his disciples were, in spite of all difficulties and opposition, men of the Church, and indeed often, as in the case of Dionysius and Gregory, admirable apostles, whereas the Collucianists were merely partisans. In this respect the first supporters of Arianism were linked up with the Rationalists, Artemon or Paul, who troubled the Church in the third century. They saw in Christianity only a religious speculation of which they were masters, and one which they claimed to carry on in complete freedom, without opposition either from the tradition they misrepresented, or from Scripture which they corrected, or from the authority they despised. Opposed to them were the Christian people, who rose up to defend the divinity of Christ. The teaching of Clement, Origen, or even of Dionysius of Alexandria, might arouse antipathy, mistrust, or denunciations; that of Paul of Samosata aroused a revolt. The same happened in the case of Arius, and here again, in spite of all the cunning of the heresiarch and all the intrigues of the Court, the revolt by the Christian people guided by its leaders will carry all before it.

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE UNDER
DIOCLETIAN§ I. THE AFRICAN WRITERS¹*The Latin Writers*

THE early years of the fourth century are of interest in Church history especially because of the great persecution which for a space of ten years ravaged and purified it, and prepared it for the peace under Constantine. In this bloody crisis, the writings which are of most value for us are the Acts of the martyrs. Even so, we must pay some attention to the Latin writers who reveal to us various aspects of Christian life at this time.

Arnobius

It was in Africa that the Christian literature of the time made its appearance, and the first to represent it was a pagan, not very well instructed in the Christian faith which he wished to accept and undertook to defend. Arnobius, of Sicca in Numidia,² was a professor of rhetoric, well known in his own town. Like other rhetoricians, he had often attacked the Christian faith in his addresses. In consequence of a dream which had led him to decide to become a Christian, he went to see the Bishop of Sicca, who welcomed with some hesitation this aged neophyte already in his sixties, whom he had hitherto regarded only as an enemy of religion. The persecution had just broken out;³ and it was not desirable that one should become a Christian merely out of caprice. The bishop wanted a guarantee from the newcomer; Arnobius composed an Apology in seven books against the pagans.

¹ Bibliography.—See works suggested for each writer.

² Editions: Reifferscheid, in the *Vienna Corpus*, Vol. IV, 1875; Migne, *P.L.*, Vol. V, 718-1288.—Studies: Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Vol. III, pp. 241-286; P. de Labriolle, *Histoire de la littérature latine chrétienne*, pp. 252-267.

³ The work of Arnobius is usually dated 303-305; Monceaux put the first two books a little earlier, about the year 297.

In this candidate for the catechumenate, we must not expect an exact knowledge of the religion he had not yet learnt. He was, in fact, not very well acquainted with his subject-matter. As an old rhetorician, he was familiar with pagan literature, and he made abundant use of it. Of Christian books he had as yet read only a few Apologies, those of Tertullian, Minucius Felix and Cyprian, and perhaps also the *Protreptikos* of Clement of Alexandria. The New Testament is rarely quoted, and not always correctly;⁴ the Old Testament is abandoned. "Let no one oppose to us the fables of the Jews. . . . They do not concern us, and have absolutely nothing in common with us." Yet after this categorical disavowal, this extemporising apologist modifies his statement: "But if, as is thought, these writings belong to us, you must seek for interpreters who are more profound than we are."⁵

Badly instructed in the Bible, Arnobius was scarcely better equipped in regard to Christian doctrine. "We Christians," he says, "are simply adorers of the sovereign King and Prince, and disciples of Christ; you will find nothing more in our religion."⁶ He eloquently develops natural theology, but does not go beyond it. God is "the First Cause, containing all things, the foundation of all that exists, having neither quality nor quantity, nor location, nor motion, nor form; human language can say nothing of him, nor express anything; to understand him we must keep silence."⁷ This negative theology is of course part of the general teaching, and the same is true of belief in a *Summus Deus*. What is more disconcerting is to find below this sovereign God a multitude of "inferior deities," born of him or created by him.⁸ Arnobius urges his pagan opponents not to confine their worship to these *dii minores*, but to ascend to the Supreme God.⁹ He reminds them of the *Timæus* of Plato; there they will see that "the gods and the world are not immortal by nature, but are kept in existence by the will of the God who is king and prince."¹⁰ This teaching was doubtless under-

⁴ De Labriolle, *op. cit.*, p. 256. Thus, in enumerating the miracles of Jesus: "One single word that he uttered appeared to different peoples speaking different languages as pronounced in their own tongue" (I, xlvi). We recognise here a rather confused recollection of the miracle of Pentecost.

⁵ *Adversus Nationes*, III, xii. Cf. De Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-257.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I, xxvii.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, xxxi.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, xxxv-xxxvi. Cf. Batiffol, *La Paix constantinienne*, pp. 196 et seq.

⁹ *Adversus Nationes*, II, iii.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, II, xxxvi.

stood by the pagans without difficulty, but it would not lead them to abandon the Syncretism which at that time the most cultivated among them found so satisfying.

Still basing himself on Plato, Arnobius protests that souls are not the immediate work of the supreme God, but of an inferior deity, yet one very high in dignity. The proof of this is that souls can err and fall. All this is presented by the apologist as the teaching of Christ;¹¹ and it is also on Christ's authority that he teaches that the soul is not immortal, but may either be destroyed by the fire of Hell or be saved by the mercy of God, according to its works.¹²

In the case of Minucius Felix, we regretted the lacunæ in an apologetic which presented only those features of Christianity which pagan readers would be likely to accept without difficulty.¹³ In Arnobius we find not only this deliberate reserve, but, what is worse, the error of a writer who, having undertaken the defence of a Faith he does not as yet know, misunderstands its dogmas. We are not surprised that the Church did not regard his Apology as an authentic exposition of its own beliefs, and instead placed it with apocryphal *Acts* among the books which were not "received."¹⁴

But though subsequently the Church rejected the testimony of Arnobius, she adopted a less severe attitude towards the writer himself; she welcomed the courageous writer who, although he did not yet know her properly, testified on her behalf in the midst of persecution, at the risk of martyrdom.

Lactantius

Lactantius¹⁵ was a pupil of Arnobius; he left Africa for Nicomedia where, doubtless as the result of a competition, he had been named by the emperor professor of Latin rhetoric. The East was

¹¹ *Ibid.*, I, xxxvi-xxxvii.

¹² "Sunt enim mediæ qualitatis, sicut Christo auctore compertum est, et interire quæ possint, deum si ignoraverint, vitæ et ab exitio liberari, si ad ejus se misericordias atque indulgentias adplicarint" (*Ibid.*, II, xiv). We remember that a similar doctrine had been taught by Tatian (cf. Bk. II, p. 574 and n. 13), and that Origen had to refute it in a colloquy with the Arabian Christians (cf. *supra*, p. 984).

¹³ Cf. *supra*, Bk. II, p. 581.

¹⁴ Gelasius, *De libris recipiendis* (Migne, P.L., Vol. LIX, 163).

¹⁵ Editions: Brandt and Laubmann, in the *Vienna Corpus*, Vols. XIX and XXVII; Migne, P.L., Vols. VI and VII.—Studies: Pichon, *Lactance*, Paris, 1901; Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 287-359; P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-295.

becoming more and more isolated from the western world, and a professor of Latin language and literature had a certain amount of leisure; Lactantius devoted his to writing.¹⁶

He was some forty years old when, about 290, he arrived at Nicomedia. He had been born a pagan and was still one at that date; but he was no longer a pagan when the persecution broke out in 303. In February of that year he was an eye-witness of the destruction of the church of Nicomedia. He was still a professor at that date. Two years later, after the abdication of Diocletian (May 305), Galerius, the sole master of the East, closed the schools: "Eloquence was condemned; advocates suppressed; jurists exiled or put to death; letters were regarded as the profession of malefactors, and scholars were treated as enemies, crushed and execrated."¹⁷ Until then, Lactantius had been able to live in Nicomedia without restraint; now he was reduced to poverty. During these terrible years we lose trace of him; we find him again at Nicomedia after the Edict of Galerius (10th April 311). Constantine, who had spent several years as a hostage in the hands of Diocletian and Galerius, and who had thus come to know the Christian rhetorician, remembered him and called him into Gaul to his son Crispus. Lactantius had by then arrived at "an extreme old age,"¹⁸ and he thus finished at the court of Constantine a life which had been full of many trials.

In the course of his long life, Lactantius had written much, both before and after his conversion. He composed a poem in hexameters on his journey from Africa to Bithynia, then a *Banquet*, as St. Methodius also did about the same time. He collected into several books a number of Letters, which later on Pope Damasus found very wearisome. St. Jerome mentions also some books addressed to Asclepiades and Probus, and a treatise on grammar. We still possess a small treatise *On Creation* written about 303 or 305, seven books of *Divine Institutions*, composed between 304 and 313, and subsequently re-edited in a shorter form under the name of *Epitome*, an *opusculum On the Wrath of God* which St. Jerome thought excellent, and lastly, after the Peace of the Church, a book *On the Death of Persecutors*.

¹⁶ St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, lxxx: "He taught rhetoric at Nicomedia and, as he had few pupils in that Greek city, he began to write."

¹⁷ *De mortibus persecutorum*, xxii, 5.

¹⁸ St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, lxxx.

This last work¹⁹ is the most individual of all; the others often tire the reader by a somewhat cold correctness, in which we find the professor of rhetoric rather than the man. Lactantius had suffered much during ten years; his friend Donatus, to whom he dedicates his book, had suffered still more. Three governors had proceeded against him: first Flaccinus, then Hierocles, and finally Priscillian; he was put to the torture nine times, but conquered them all: "What a spectacle for the eyes of God. . . . That is a real triumph, to reign over kings" (xvi, 4-7). The work begins with a song of victory:

All our enemies have been routed, peace has been restored to the world, and here is the Church, so recently buffeted, rising up once more, and through the mercy of God, the temple of God which the wicked had destroyed is clothed with greater glory (I, 2).

Then, after a short introduction recalling some features of the previous history of the Church, and the punishments which have fallen upon its persecutors, Lactantius comes to the reign of Diocletian, and traces step by step the bloody events he has himself witnessed. In this picture rhetoric is not absent, but it is inspired by a passion so sincere that we become eye-witnesses of those tragic scenes: the long hesitations of the aged Diocletian, who comes under the strong influence of Galerius; this leads Diocletian first to police measures, and the destruction of churches; then he is induced by anger and terror to start the bloody persecution (chs. xi-xiv). Two years later efforts are made to persuade Diocletian to abdicate: the old man laments and weeps, then at last yields to severe pressure, saying: "Let it be so, if you wish it." Then Galerius insists that he shall choose between the two Cæsars, Severus and Maximin Daia. Diocletian at first rebels: "Do you want me to entrust the government of the State to these unworthy men?"—"I will answer for it."—"Very well: it is your affair, as you are taking the supreme power; for my part I have worked hard enough and looked to the security of the State; if some misfortune should come about now, I shall not be responsible." And finally we have the unforgettable scene in which, to the astonishment of the army, Daia is suddenly made Cæsar: "He was taken away from his herds

¹⁹ The authenticity of this book has been often called in question, but since Pichon's work it is generally accepted. Cf. Pichon, *op. cit.*, pp. 377-383; Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-344; De Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 288-293; Moricca, *Storia della Letteratura Latina Cristiana*, Vol. I, 1925, pp. 652-657.

and woods, and given the East to trample under foot and to crush" (chs. xviii-xix). These incidents have arrested the attention of all, and even to-day this tragic history cannot be narrated without making use of the recollections of Lactantius.

Like Eusebius, with whom, incidentally, he has many characteristics in common, Lactantius freely quotes official documents, and these citations are of a striking character. Thus, after the account of the shameful and painful agony of Galerius, we have the edict in which this dying persecutor speaks of his clemency, and asks Christians to pray to their God for him (ch. xxxiv). And at the end of this narrative, so full of emotion and of pride, the Christian writer cries out:

Where are now those magnificent and haughty surnames of Jupiter and Hercules, which Diocles²⁰ and Maximian insolently adopted and bequeathed to their successors? The Lord has blotted them out from the earth. Let us celebrate the triumph of God, and sing of the victory of the Lord; day and night in our prayers let us celebrate it, that God may confirm for all eternity this peace which after ten years he has granted to his people (ch. lii).

Commodianus

Side by side with these two rhetoricians, but in strange contrast with them, Africa produced a plebeian who in two popular poems exalted his faith and reproved his opponents. Commodianus²¹ is personally unknown to us; there has been much discussion as to his country of origin, and the time when he lived. His two small books are almost our only source of information; they invite us to look for their author in Africa, during the period which we are at present studying.²²

Like Arnobius and Lactantius, Commodianus was of pagan origin;²³ like them he became an apologist, but he adopted quite

²⁰ [Diocles was the original name of Diocletian.—Tr.]

²¹ Edition of the *Instructiones* in Migne, P.L., Vol. V; the *Carmen Apologeticum* is in Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense*, Vol. I, pp. 21-49. Edition of the two poems by Dombart in the *Vienna Corpus*, Vol. XV.—Studies: Monceaux, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 451-489; P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-251.

²² Monceaux (*op. cit.*, p. 458) dates them "certainly after 260 and before 313, very likely between 305 and 313; and doubtless, if the author imitated Lactantius, in 311-312." P. de Labriolle (*op. cit.*, p. 249) says: "between 250 and the Edict of Milan (313)."

²³ *Instit.*, I, i, 5.

another method. He had little training in classical culture, and no taste for it. What is the use of reading Virgil, Cicero and Terence? What is wanted is a rule of life;²⁴ and this is precisely what he claims to give his readers. He does so in two books. The first, called *Instructiones*, is a collection of eighty pieces;²⁵ the second, called *Carmen Apologeticum*, is a poem of 1,060 hexameters. In these two books, the language displays no care for morphology or syntax, and the verse disdains metre.²⁶ Through all these careless ways the author continues his poem as best he can, as a labourer pushes a barrow across broken ground. Seeing him carrying on in this fashion, literary minds might well regard the man with compassion, pitying "his barren style, and his verses, which do not deserve the name."²⁷

Theologians have more serious criticisms to make: as Gennadius says, this convert, who made himself an apologist, was ignorant of almost all Christian doctrines. The God whom he praises and usually calls the Supreme (*Summus Deus*) is the sovereign deity venerated by many pagans at that time.²⁸ True, a rapid reading of the Old Testament and of the Gospels had enriched and purified this conception of the Supreme Being, but it had not given it the firmness and fullness it has in the Christian revelation. We notice this especially when the apologist tries to expound the mysteries of the Trinity or the Incarnation. His very confused statements suggest a Monarchianist and Modalist theology rather than the doc-

²⁴ *Carmen*, v. 577 et seq.

²⁵ These pieces are acrostics or alphabetical compositions; these artifices are apparently intended to help in memorising.

²⁶ On the language and metre, cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 481-489. These verses of Commodianus should be compared with those of the metric inscriptions fairly common in Africa, which are distant imitations of the classic hexameters. Cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 430-449.

²⁷ These are the expressions of Gennadius (*De viris illustribus*, xv): "Scriptis mediocri sermone quasi versu." He adds: "As he had scarcely opened Christian books, he was better able to refute the errors of our opponents than to establish the truth of our doctrine."

²⁸ Cf. Batiffol, *Summus Deus*, in *La Paix constantinienne*, pp. 188-201. Batiffol indicates traces of this cult in the apologists Arnobius and Lactantius; to these we must add Commodianus, in whom the title *Summus* is the proper name of God. Thus, in *Carmen*, v. 26-27, we read.

"Cui Summus divitias, honores addidit altos.
Nec enim vitupero divitias datas a Summo."

Cf. *ibid.*, v. 55; 432; 444; 535; 540; 737; 917; 924; 960.

trine of one God in three Persons, and of the incarnate Son of God.²⁹ Tertullian, as we remember, complained that simple folk want to hear only about the divine Monarchy, and were alarmed by the Trinity.³⁰ In that respect also Commodianus was one of the simple people. He was simple also in the wholehearted adhesion he gave to Millenarianism, conceived, as Gennadius says, in its lowest and grossest form.³¹ In the *Instructiones*, this eschatology is only briefly mentioned; in the *Carmen* it is the subject of more than two hundred lines; the poet delights in these pictures of troubles, massacres, feastings and triumphs;³² everything is found there—an interpretation of the *Apocalypse*, the dreams of Papias, the imprecations of the Sybilline books, and even a secret source which the author does not specify more clearly.³³

It is not unlikely that the ten years of troubles which the Church had passed through, and the triumph which had followed, gave to Christian eschatology a character which was often rather materialistic, and which contrasted with the symbolical interpretation St. Dionysius had vindicated about the year 260. Millenarianism appears in the three Africans we have just been studying; we shall find it again, but in a much more moderate form, in Methodius. Lastly, we notice in these Africans, at least in Arnobius and Commodianus,³⁴ a hatred of Rome which was unknown to their predecessors; we see in it the beginnings of that jealous regionalism which will very soon endanger the unity of the Empire and constitute a grave peril for the Church itself.

²⁹ *Carmen*, v. 275 et seq.:

"Hic Pater in Filio venit, Deus unus ubique.
Nec Pater est dictus, nisi factus Filius esset . . ."

v. 358 et seq.:

"Idcirco nec voluit se manifestare quid esset,
Sed Filium dixit se missum fuisse a Patre.
Sic ipse tradiderat semet ipsum dici prophetis,
Ut Deus in terris Altissimi Filius esset."

These texts seem to indicate fairly clearly that God, in becoming man, manifested himself as Son of God.

³⁰ Cf. *supra*, p. 1084.

³¹ *Instructiones*, xlv, 9: "Et generant ipsi per annos mille nubentes." Cf. Lactantius, *Institutiones*, VII, xxiv: ". . . non morientur; sed per eosdem mille annos infinitam multitudinem generabunt."

³² *Instructiones*, xli-xlv; *Carmen*, v. 783-end.

³³ He thus speaks of the return of Nero: "De quo pauca tamen suggero, quæ legi secreta."

³⁴ Cf. Monceaux, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 242-243 and 461.

§ 2. ST. METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS¹*Works of St. Methodius*

Of the various writers in the period we are studying, St. Methodius is one whose literary output has been best preserved; yet his personality is one of the least known. Whereas we can cite only a few fragments of the theological works of the last Alexandrians of the century, we possess whole works of Methodius, either in the original Greek or in Slavonic versions. But in these works the author does not tell us much about himself, and his contemporaries or successors scarcely speak of him. Eusebius greatly resented Methodius's opposition to Origen, and he took his revenge by being silent about him.

His Literary Activity

Methodius, Bishop of Olympus in Lycia,² had a brilliant career as a writer towards the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries. He was trained in Hellenic culture and a great reader of the philosophers, especially of Plato, and he also possessed an extensive knowledge of Christian literature, e.g. the apologists,

¹ Editions and Translations: *Methodius, herausgegeben* von N. Bonwetsch, Leipzig, 1917; the same editor had published in 1891 in a German translation the Slavonic version of the works of Methodius.—Migne, P.G., Vol. XVIII, 27-408.—*The De Autexusio of Methodius of Olympus*, Slavonic version and Greek text, translated into French by A. Vaillant, Paris, 1930 (*Patrologia orientalis*, XXII, 5), *Le Banquet des dix vierges*, translated into French by J. Farges, Paris, 1932; *Du libre arbitre*, ditto, with introduction by J. Farges, Paris, 1929.—Studies: J. Farges, *Les idées morales et religieuses de Méthode d'Olympe*, Paris, 1929; A. Puech, *Histoire de la Littérature grecque chrétienne*, Vol. II, pp. 511-540; E. Amann, art. *Méthode d'Olympe* in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, Vol. X, cols. 1606-1614; G. Bardy, *La Vie spirituelle d'après les Pères des trois premiers siècles*, Paris, 1935, pp. 301-316.

² There has been much discussion as to the episcopal see occupied by Methodius, and it has been placed in turn at Olympus, Para, Sidon, Tyre, Myra and finally at Philippi. In favour of this last city, F. Diekamp brings forward the data of the Slavonic version, which other indications seem to confirm (*Theol. Quartalschrift*, Vol. CIX, 1928, pp. 285-308); his ideas have been accepted by M. Lebon in *Revue d'Hist. ecclési.*, Vol. XXV, 1929, pp. 357-358, but his conclusions are rejected by Vaillant, *op. cit.*, p. 636, n. 1: "The recent article by Diekamp proves only one thing, and that is that the error goes back to John of Antioch, that is, to the seventh century." Cf. Bonwetsch, *op. cit.*, p. xxxvii. Methodius's stay in Lycia in the neighbourhood of Mount Olympus is attested by himself (*De resurrectione*, ii, 23).

Irenæus, the Alexandrians, and above all Origen,³ to whom he seems to have given great praise in his first writings.⁴ Subsequently, when he was attacking the Origenist doctrine on creation, he still continued to express his admiration for its author. But gradually the disagreement became more acute; in the treatise *On Free Will*, the tone was still quite moderate, but in the book *On the Resurrection* the judgment was severe, and at once led to violent protests which caused Methodius much trouble.⁵

This literary activity seems to have had as its basis an oral teaching which collected around Methodius a circle of disciples. It was to them that Methodius addressed himself at the beginning of his treatise *On Free Will*:

I feel that I am already enjoying the highest good things in dealing with these questions, especially when I have before me such an array of flowers as the assembly constituted by all you who together listen and praise with me the divine mysteries. And to you I speak without fear, because you listen to me with ears free from all envy. . . . O splendid audience, august banquet, and rich spiritual food! It is in such society that I have always wished to live.⁶

The Treatise On Free Will

This Introduction provides a framework for the dialogue, and enables us better to understand it. It is not a verbatim account of a real discussion, such as that which Dionysius of Alexandria had carried on at Arsinoë against Nepos, or Origen at Bostra against Beryllus; it is not even a fictional account of a real meeting, as would seem to be the case with the dialogue of Justin with Trypho;

³ In elucidating his points of contact with previous literature, it will be useful to consult the index in Bonwetsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 532-538.

⁴ St. Jerome, replying to Rufinus, writes: "Eusebius of Cæsarea, in the sixth book of his *Apology for Origen*, addresses to Methodius, bishop and martyr, the reproaches which you address to me because of the way I have praised Origen. He says: 'How could Methodius now write against Origen, seeing that he himself has spoken in such terms of Origen's doctrines?'" This *Apology* belongs to the year 308.

⁵ He remarks on this at the beginning of his little treatise *On the Distinction of Foods*: "How Satan made me suffer, when I finished my treatise *On Virginity*! And then how many trials he heaped upon me even before I could finish the *Treatise On the Resurrection*! He raised up the waves like impassable mountains, i.e. sufferings and attacks so great that they made me despair of life" (ed. Bonwetsch, p. 427). This progressive development of the Origenist polemics in Methodius has been well traced by Vaillant, *op. cit.*, p. 652.

⁶ Ed. Vaillant, p. 730.

it is a pure literary fiction, bringing together the upholders of opposite doctrines, and intended to be read by a public interested in such discussions.

In this dialogue, which is to-day known as the treatise *On Free Will*, but which the Slavonic version more correctly called *On God, Matter, and Free Will*, Methodius set out to seek for the origin of evil. This does not come from an uncreated matter, it is not eternal like God; it arises from the abuse of free will. The question here debated is one which had been much discussed during a century and a half. The opponents envisaged by Methodius are not Gnostics, but Platonists. In the course of the discussion, the apologist more than once comes up against Origen. He subscribes to the latter's defence of free will and his explanation of the apostasy of the devil, but rejects his idea of an eternal succession of worlds.⁷

The Banquet of Ten Virgins

The *Banquet of Ten Virgins* is likewise a literary exercise. As its title indicates, it is inspired by Plato, and it is certainly a bold stroke on the part of Methodius to undertake to rewrite Plato's *Banquet*, and still more to transform the eulogy of Love into a eulogy of Virginité. If we consider the literary form, we must admit at once that the imitation does not come up to the model: from beginning to end the writer pursues his theme of virginité without succeeding in giving a personal and living picture of the virgins he introduces. He is a better Christian than an artist; he has before his eyes a very high ideal, and from time to time, especially in the discourse of Thecla and in the final hymn, he raises himself up to this ideal, taking his audience with him.

The name of Thecla, which we have just mentioned, takes us back towards the *Acts of Paul*, and this is not the only feature in which the *Banquet* of Methodius reminds us of the apocryphal *Acts* of apostles. We find it brimful of that personal devotion to Christ which the authors of the *Acts* treated with such fervour, and which Origen on the contrary tried to restrain.⁸ But above all, this enthusiastic eulogy of virginité, which occupies the whole book from one end to the other, introduces us to a circle very like that

⁷ This refutation is explicitly formulated in the *De creatis*, quoted by Photius (ed. Bonwetsch, pp. 494 *et seq.*); we find its starting point in the work *On Free Will* (ed. Vaillant, p. 831); cf. *Introduction*, *ibid.*, p. 650.

⁸ Cf. *supra*, pp. 991 and 1083.

of the *Acts* of Paul, Peter, John and Thomas. But we must point out here that the Bishop of Olympus avoids absolutely the exaggerated thesis often maintained by the authors of those *Acts*.

There is no trace of encratism in him: virginity is exalted as the best life of all, and the one most closely united to Christ, but marriage is not a corruption; we must praise and prefer purity, but not regard the generation of children with disgust. And repeating the words of St. Paul, Methodius continues: "He that giveth his virgin in marriage doth well, and he that giveth her not doth better." He adds: "In setting forth that which is better and sweeter, the Word has not forbidden the rest, but he has laid down as a law the assigning to each one of what is proper and useful to him."⁹

The Treatise On the Resurrection

The treatise *On the Resurrection* is, as we have seen, later than the *Banquet*; the discussion of the Origenist theses which is only incidental in the other books is here always to the fore. Methodius very fairly sets forth the thesis of his opponent: the human body may be compared to a river; it does not remain two days the same; what ensures its identity is the permanence of the "characteristic form"; in the resurrection the soul will assume this again, yet the substratum which preceded will not be quite the same.¹⁰

This interpretation does not satisfy Methodius; he requires something more to ensure the identity of the risen body: just as at the Transfiguration Christ's body, as it then was, became luminous, so also our bodies will be transfigured, yet will be identical with our present ones.¹¹

The Origenist hypothesis of the pre-existence of souls is rejected more sternly and with more reason: to say that souls have come

⁹ All this speech by Theophilus is devoted to this theme; the author therein describes the generation of children in so exact a manner that the French translator (Farges) more than once abandons his task and replaces some lines by marks of omission. [He seems to do so out of a false sense of modesty. I quote this passage in full, and a similar passage from St. John Chrysostom, in a forthcoming work on the *Mystery of Sex and Marriage*.—Tr.]

¹⁰ This explanation of Origen's, taken from his commentaries on the *Psalms* (Migne, P.G., Vol. XII, 1093) is transcribed by Methodius in the *De resurrectione*, i, 20-24; the essential portion of the text has been translated by Prat, *Origène*, pp. 92-94. As is pointed out by Prat and Farges (*Les Idées morales*, p. 195), this explanation, which Methodius rejects, would not be condemned by modern theologians.

¹¹ *De resurrectione*, iii, 14.

down to earth from heaven is to use fine words which make no sense, and to invent a fable worthy of tragedy.¹² Moreover, it is not true that the body is a prison for the soul; it is an instrument which the soul can use, certainly in order to sin, but also in order to do good.¹³

The Theology of Methodius

In all these discussions we note that Methodius is very much on his guard against Origenism, the attractiveness of which he fully realises, and from which he wants to preserve or deliver his hearers. His own theology has here and there some obscurities or confusion;¹⁴ but on the whole it is more faithful to tradition; Methodius attaches more value to the ideas of the churchmen who have preceded him, and this constituted a safeguard so far as he himself was concerned.

In a work composed during the lifetime of Methodius and belonging to his school, there is a lengthy citation from the bishop, given not under the name of its author but as "the doctrine of the Universal Church."¹⁵ This strong expression at least indicates the aim of the Bishop of Olympus: he wants to be a churchman above

¹² *Ibid.*, i, 55.

¹³ *Ibid.*, i, 54 *et seq.* Cf. J. Farges, *op. cit.*, pp. 97 *et seq.*

¹⁴ Particularly in the *Banquet*, discourse iii. Thus, on the suitability of the Incarnation, he says: "It was very suitable that the most ancient of the Aeons, the first of the Archangels, having to come into human society, should establish his dwelling in the most ancient and first of men, Adam." Farges, on whose French translation this English text is based, notes: "In spite of the dogmatic inaccuracy of certain expressions, there is no room for doubt as to the meaning of the doctrine of Methodius: it is in perfect harmony with the Faith which will be defined at Nicæa." Combefis was of a different opinion: "Id purus Arianismus est" (Migne, P.G., Vol. XVIII, 65, n. 42). I do not think it is correct to regard this as Arianism: Methodius taught the eternal generation of the Son of God (*Banquet*, viii, 9), which was denied by Arianism; but it must at least be allowed that he was not able to keep himself from Subordinationism: cf. *Banquet*, viii, 7; x, 6; *Adv. Porph.*, fragm., 2. His Christology was likewise set forth sometimes in an incorrect manner, particularly in *Banquet*, iii, 3-7. Combefis finds Nestorianism here (*loc. cit.*), but there is no need to go so far as that, especially if we consider the theology of Methodius as a whole; but it must be granted that in these matters, which had not then been fully defined, his thought was lacking in precision.

¹⁵ Adamantius, *De recta in Deum fide*, iv, 11 (ed. Van de Sande Bakhuyzen, p. 168). This treatise, written in the time of persecution (i, 21; Rufinus's translation, p. 41), is later than the works of Methodius, which it utilises, and must belong to the early years of the fourth century. It seems to have been written by a member of the school of Methodius. Cf. Vaillant, *op. cit.*, pp. 651-653.

all else. This had been the ambition of Origen;¹⁶ it is also that of Methodius, and in him it is more farseeing, more thorough, and more effective as a safeguard.

If we consider the doctrine of Methodius as a whole, we recognise in it several features which betray an early Origenist training from which he never completely freed himself. In the first place, we have the allegorical interpretation of Scripture: the Jewish legislation must be regarded as a symbol of Christian realities.¹⁷ Then in theology we have the fundamental importance attributed to the doctrine of freedom, and the refutation of astrological fatalism; again, the Subordinationist conception which sees in the Son and the Holy Spirit the "lance-bearing powers" of God;¹⁸ and more generally, the idealist philosophy which is, as it were, the atmosphere in which Methodius lives and thinks.

But the further we proceed in reading his works, we find that the theologian puts himself on guard, with a vigilance increasing from one work to another, in respect to the seductions of idealism. He silences the Sirens in order to hear only the Choir of the Prophets;¹⁹ he rejects the pre-existence of souls, interprets the resurrection of the body in the strictest way, and repudiates the whole Origenist eschatology.²⁰

Methodius's theology bears the marks of this early formation and later reaction: sometimes bold and at other times timid, it is on the whole prudently balanced, but somewhat lacking in assurance. It seems to have had a certain influence: the work *On the Orthodox Faith*, which we have mentioned above, is an indication of this;²¹

¹⁶ Vaillant (*op. cit.*, p. 651) recalls the declarations of Origen at the beginning of his treatise *De principiis*. It must be remembered that, during the eighty years which separated the two works, the Church's doctrine had been defined in a more precise way.

¹⁷ This is particularly noticeable in the two small treatises *On the Distinction of Foods* and *On Leprosy*. But it must be observed that Methodius is more reserved than Barnabas; he accepts the literal meaning of the prescriptions; he sees in the ritual prescriptions a symbolical signification, as well as the literal sense.

¹⁸ *Banquet*, x, 6. This formula comes from Philo. Cf. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. II, p. 422 and n. 2.

¹⁹ *On Free Will*, Preface.

²⁰ This reaction goes so far that it brings Methodius near the Millenarianists. He is certainly not so realistic as St. Irenæus, but like him, he looks for a millennium of rest and happiness after the Resurrection. Cf. *Banquet*, ix, 1 and ix, 5. Cf. Farges, *Idées morales*, pp. 212 *et seq.*

²¹ This work, which bears the name of Adamantius and is entitled *Dialogue on the Orthodox Faith*, is a refutation of the heresies of Marcion and Valentine.

but this influence did not spread very far. Moreover, current events helped to stifle it: the bloody years of the reigns of Diocletian and Galerius were not very favourable to theological speculation, and the din of the persecutions drowned the voice of Methodius. It was the last act of the tragedy which had continued during three centuries. With the edicts of pacification a new era was to begin, and fifteen years after the death of Methodius we shall have the Council of Nicæa. The theology which we have been studying was entirely ante-Nicene. Methodius was not a forerunner; Dionysius of Rome and Gregory Thaumaturgus opened the way for the Fathers of Nicæa, but we cannot say as much for the Bishop of Olympus. In the doctrine of the Trinity he does not altogether manage to free himself from the confusion which Dionysius of Rome criticised in the catechists of Alexandria; moreover, it was not questions of theology that attracted his attention but rather moral and mystical problems, free will and human responsibility, and still more virginity and union with Christ, the heavenly Spouse of souls.

That is why Methodius is of such interest to us even today. Of the speculative problems he discussed, several concern only the historians of the third century; but every Christian can read once more with profit his eulogy of virginity and, thinking of his life crowned by martyrdom—for he died a martyr's death in 311—apply to him the refrain of the canticle he puts in the mouth of Thecla: "I keep myself pure for thee, and carrying my lighted lamp, O Spouse, I come to meet thee."

Its chief interest is that it gives us more knowledge of these two heresies. Editions: Van de Sande Bakhuysen, in the *Berlin Corpus*; Migne, *P.G.*, Vol. XI, 1711-1884. Study: Puech, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 536-540.

ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANISATION¹

DURING this third century, while the Church was extending its conquests in the way we have described and its relations with the State were passing through such sharp alternations, its own structure remained in its essential elements what it already was in the preceding century.

For already from about the middle of the second century, the Church took the form which in the main she would henceforth possess. The essential elements of ecclesiastical organisation which existed at least in germ from the beginning are seen at that time in their definite and final contours. In the period immediately following, we shall find only variations or growths of secondary importance, although these are not without interest as expressions of the Church's development.

§ I. CLERGY AND LAITY

Training of the Clergy

We have seen that from the first there was a distinction between those whose business it was to direct their brethren in the Faith and the simple believers, in other words between clergy and laity. The former, who had the task of instructing and training the latter in the Christian life, had themselves to receive a training which would fit them for the task. The progressive subdivision of the ecclesiastical orders, and the custom which soon arose of raising a

¹ Bibliography.—As for ch. xi. Add the works indicated in the notes to the present chapter, and the following: F. X. Funk, *Zölibat und Priestertum im Christlichen Altertum*, in *Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen*, Vol. I, Paderborn, 1927, pp. 151 et seq.; E. Vacandard, *Les origines du célibat ecclésiastique*, in *Etudes de critique et d'histoire religieuse*, Vol. I, Paris, 1913, pp. 62 et seq.; Ch. de Smedt, *L'organisation des Eglises chrétiennes au IIIe siècle*, in *Revue des Questions historiques*, Vol. I, 1891-1892, pp. 397 et seq.; L. Duchesne, *Notes sur la topographie de Rome au moyen âge*, II. *Les titres presbytéraux et les diaconies*, in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, published by the French School in Rome, Vol. VII, 1887, pp. 218 et seq.; J. P. Kirsch, *Die römische Titelkirchen*, in *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums*, IX, 1-2, Paderborn, 1918.

cleric to a higher order only after he had been tested in a lower one, facilitated this system of training. The catechetical schools doubtless also played their part, although they had at first only a somewhat more elementary function. In short, "the methodic teaching of the art of ruling souls took the place of the extraordinary effusion of spiritual gifts or charisms which had so largely contributed to the instruction and direction of the newly born Church in the apostolic age (I Cor. xii, 28 *et seq.*)."²

Their Obligations

The clergy to whom was entrusted so high a mission ought to be able to devote themselves wholly to it. Hence the principle that he who serves the altar should live by the altar (I Cor. ix, 13). The faithful carried out their obligations in this matter by bringing offerings (*oblaciones*) to the divine service. The *Didache* (ch. xiii) and the *Didascalia of the Apostles* (chs. viii and xviii) call upon Christians to remember the Church when disposing of their goods. The building up of ecclesiastical property, which we deal with later on,³ will moreover very soon ensure resources less subject to fluctuation. Nevertheless, neither the ecclesiastical revenues nor the contributions of the faithful were everywhere and always sufficient for the upkeep of the clergy. Some of the clergy possessed private fortunes and lived thereby, or following the example of St. Paul, who made tents (*Acts* xviii, 3 and xx, 34), provided their subsistence by manual labour or even by commerce. It is not surprising that abuses arose in consequence: St. Cyprian⁴ was scandalised at the commercial operations of certain bishops; the wealth of Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, led to similar protests, and at the end of the third century, the Council of Elvira (canon 19) forbade bishops, priests and deacons to frequent the markets far and wide in order to carry on business there.

The members of the clergy should of course have a higher ideal and give an example of a life more detached from earthly contingencies. Being charged with the sanctification of others, they were by that very fact called to lead a more holy life; accordingly they were also bound from the early times to fulfil certain moral

² Funk-Hemmer, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 87.

³ Cf. *infra*, pp. 1146 *et seq.*

⁴ *De lapsis*, iv.

conditions which would distinguish them from the mass of Christians, but these conditions did not then possess the increasing rigour they were to have later on. The epistles to Timothy and Titus had laid it down that a bishop or a deacon should be the husband of only one wife,⁵ that is to say, they should be married only once. Neophytes or recent converts, Christians who had undergone public penance, those who had received baptism according to the rite used for the sick,⁶ and those who had undergone voluntary mutilation, were likewise excluded in principle from sacred orders. But celibacy was not made obligatory for the clergy in the first centuries; and married men receiving orders did not thereby contract an obligation to observe continence. Nevertheless, very soon the rule prevailed that the higher clergy, bishops, priests and deacons, should not marry after their ordination, unless they returned to the ranks of the laity. The idea of the superiority of continence over marriage and of the desirability of the former in God's ministers was implied in this rule, and it was bound to tend to associate together the ideas of the priesthood and celibacy. As a fairly large number of Christians voluntarily elected to live in this latter state because it was regarded as more pleasing to God, it was natural that the members of the clergy should be recruited from the ranks of such. The custom by spreading was bound to tend towards the establishing of a law. But celibacy was imposed by an express law only at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century, and even then it was in fact restricted to one single country. About the year 300,⁷ the Council of Illiberis (Elvira), setting forth the discipline of the Church of Spain, made continence an obligation for bishops, priests and deacons (canon 33). But this legislation remained for some time an exception in the universal Church, and twenty-five years later the Council of Nicæa refused to make it general.⁸

Ascetics and Virgins

The current which was carrying many Christians towards asceticism was nevertheless very strong, so much so that those who had decided to live a celibate life and to carry out various kinds of

⁵ *Timothy* iii, 2-3; *Titus* i, 5-9.

⁶ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii. Council of Neocæsarea, canon 12.

⁷ On this date, cf. *infra*, p. 1118.

⁸ Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*, Vol. I.

renunciation soon obtained a special position in the Church, even when they did not enter the ranks of the clergy. They were given a special name, the ascetics, ἀσκηταί, or in Latin *continentes*. The life they were leading, though still with their families, was a prelude to that of the monks who became an institution in the Church from the fourth century. Paul of Thebes, who has already been mentioned, was regarded as its founder.⁹ There were *continentes* of each sex, and the virgins, *virgines consecratae* or *virgines canonicæ*, according to the expression used of a group of martyrs of Sirmium, at the time of the persecution of Diocletian,¹⁰ were esteemed no less than the male *continentes*.

True, it was from among the female *continentes* that there arose for a time a class of persons less recommendable, those called *virgines subintroductæ*, συνείσακτοι, *agapetæ* or companions, who contracted a kind of spiritual marriage with a Christian with whom they dwelt, which sometimes ended up in concubinage. Already in the second century the Church began to condemn so paradoxical a practice because of abuses which took place. The Council of Antioch about 268 made it one of the complaints against Paul of Samosata, and it was likewise envisaged in the 27th canon of the Council of Elvira, which authorised ecclesiastics to retain only their sisters or daughters, and then on condition they were virgins and consecrated to God.¹¹

The Confessors

The confessors, courageous Christians who had suffered for the faith in times of persecution but had not had to sacrifice their lives, were also, as is natural, greatly honoured, and we have already seen¹² that in their regard, after the great crises of the third century, it was a question whether they were not usurping the place of the authorities of the Church, for in various places and especially in Africa they arrogated to themselves the right to absolve, by giving certificates restoring to the Christian community the *lapsi* or Christians who had fallen but who were repentant and who, by this

⁹ Cf. Vol. III, p. 796.

¹⁰ Cf. *infra*, p. 1198.

¹¹ On this subject, cf. H. Achelis, *Virgines subintroductæ*, Leipzig, 1902, and the excellent corrective by P. de Labriolle, *Le mariage spirituel dans l'antiquité chrétienne*, in *Revue historique*, Vol. CXXXVII, 1921-1922, pp. 204 *et seq.*

¹² Cf. *supra*, pp. 848 *et seq.*

very easy method, endeavoured to escape the more or less lengthy period of penance normally required in order to expiate their fault. The idea was that the merits of the best made reparation for the faults of those who were not so good. This might be an application of the "communion of saints" and would appear very touching, if the proud pretensions and rebellious attitude of some confessors had not profoundly vitiated it. In point of fact we have here in another domain something like a reappearance of the tendency so impetuously manifested in Montanism, i.e. the tendency to oppose the "spirituals" to the bishop, and individual charisms to the hierarchy. We know that the episcopal reaction was a strong one, but that the situation called also for prudence, and that the legitimate heads of the churches did not always remain easily masters of the situation.¹³ The twenty-fifth canon of the Council of Elvira, which aimed at preventing the faithful from utilising the title of "confessor" in the letters of recommendation often exchanged from church to church, shows that at the end of the third century the bishops still found it necessary to deal with the abusive use of this title.

§ 2. THE GRADES OF HOLY ORDERS

The Bishop as the Incarnation of the Church

In spite of the crisis which for a moment seemed to threaten their authority, the bishops nevertheless remain the sole heads of the churches, of which they are, so to speak, the incarnation. The bishop is the Church: *Ecclesia in episcopo*, wrote St. Cyprian,¹ who in his own diocese of Carthage had been faced with the gravest difficulties arising out of the collusion between confessors and the *lapsi*. Yet it is in Cyprian's actions and writings, and especially in his treatise, *De catholicæ Ecclesiæ unitate*, that we best find the concrete idea of what is meant by a head of a church. The centre of each church, and seat of the *unanimitas* or *consensio* which gives to the assembly of all the faithful who compose it one single mind, is the bishop, who is elected indeed by the people but whose sacred character is conferred on him by God. This character is given by episcopal consecration, which is conferred upon one already ap-

¹³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 849 et seq.

¹ *Epist.*, xxxiii, 1.

pointed as a bishop. The custom was very soon established whereby the consecrating bishop was assisted by two colleagues, just as the election had to be confirmed by the bishops of the province, headed by the metropolitan, if such officially existed.² Once he received this twofold investiture, divine and human, a bishop, as successor of the apostles charged essentially with the maintenance of unity, enjoyed the widest prerogatives. He was the leader of the flock, which owed him obedience, and to which in turn he owed his love, zeal and devotion, together with an example of virtue.

Growing Importance of the Office of Priests

The bishop was still almost the sole official in the Church of the third century. Nevertheless the office of the priests subordinate to him began to grow in importance. The increase of the Christian population in the great cities necessitated the creation of numerous ecclesiastical centres, which would later on be called parishes,³ and quite naturally priests were set over these. The great persecutions of the third century, on the other hand, by depriving many churches of their bishops, who were compelled to hide themselves or else to suffer martyrdom, and could not always be replaced immediately, led to the members of the presbyteral body taking a much more active part in ecclesiastical government than they had taken previously. But doubtless it was only by degrees, as circumstances rendered necessary a modification of the preceding practice, that those in charge of presbyteral churches added to their former functions, which were those of instructing the faithful, preparing catechumens for baptism, and penitents for reconciliation, the further function of celebrating the eucharistic mysteries, in which originally priests had officiated only conjointly with the bishop.⁴

The territorial division of a single church into sections entrusted in this way to priests, or to be more precise, the multiplication of places of worship under the charge of priests would, in the case of Rome (where these local centres of religious life were known as *tituli*), go back to the second century, if we could believe the *Liber Pontificalis*, which names Pope Evaristus as the originator of this

² Cf. *infra*, pp. 1119-1120.

³ On the evolution of the word *parœcia*, cf. Bk. III, p. 775, and *infra*, p. 1113.

⁴ Cf. Ch. de Smedt, *L'organisation des églises chrétiennes au IIIe siècle*, in *Revue des Questions historiques*, Vol. L, 1891-1892, pp. 397 et seq.

practice.⁵ We are told that this Pope entrusted these churches to the twenty-five Roman priests already ordained by Pope Cletus or Anacletus,⁶ the second in succession to St. Peter. But all this sounds very much like legendary detail, especially as the creation of the presbyteral titles is subsequently attributed by the *Liber Pontificalis* itself to two other pontiffs, Urban,⁷ the contemporary of Alexander Severus, and about a hundred years later still, Marcellus,⁸ immediately after the Diocletian persecution. It is possible that the last-mentioned Pope, who reorganised the Roman Church after the terror, did really establish or re-establish the *tituli* which, in the second hypothesis, would go back at least to the third century, though it would not be possible to determine its foundation in any precise way. In any case, there were already many more than twenty-five priests in Rome in the middle of the third century, for a letter of Pope Cornelius (251-253) mentions forty-six.⁹ In Egypt, there were at the beginning of the fourth century, according to the sentence of deposition of the heresiarch Arius, seventeen priests at Alexandria itself, and nineteen in Mareotis, a district which depended immediately upon Alexandria.¹⁰ We may suppose that the numbers were proportional in the other great cities.

The Deacons

The deacons continued, during the period extending from the end of the second century to the Peace of Constantine, to play in the Church the important though subordinate part which we have described in the preceding period.¹¹ Invested with a liturgical ministry and also with one of charity, they took their part in divine service, watched over the maintenance of external discipline and, under the control of the bishop, occupied themselves with the temporal administration of the community, and especially with the distribution to the poor of the offerings of the faithful.

In several churches, headed by Rome, their number had been

⁵ *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 126.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 143, where we read: "Hic fecit ministeria sacrata omnia argentea constituit et patenas argenteas XXV posuit."

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁹ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii, 11.

¹⁰ Letter from St. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria (Migne, P.G., Vol. XVIII, 577-581).

¹¹ Cf. Bk. II, p. 483.

fixed at seven, doubtless in imitation of the "seven deacons" of the church of Jerusalem.¹² Also we find that in Rome the Christian population of the city was divided into seven regions, each having at its head a deacon for its ecclesiastical ministration; this division, possibly following the fourteen administrative divisions of the city grouped in pairs, was thus independent of the division into presbyteral *tituli*. The Liberian Catalogue attributes this foundation of the seven Roman "deaconries" to Pope Fabian, who was elected in 236 and died a victim of the Decian Persecution in 250.¹³

In some churches, and especially at Rome, the first deacon—later on called the archdeacon—occupied quite a prominent place. He was in fact the chief personage in the Christian community after the bishop, and often succeeded him in the see. It was an innovation when, after the death of Pope Fabian in the Decian persecution of 250, the priests having taken over the government of the Church, and the deacons having probably all perished, the priest Cornelius was promoted to the supreme office in 251.¹⁴

The Inferior Orders

According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, Fabian also instituted seven subdeacons. Whether this statement be correct or not, the assertions of the *Liber* calling for caution, it was certainly in the course of the third century that, below the deacons, there appeared the various inferior orders of clergy. Only one is certainly an earlier institution—the lectors, ἀναγνώσται, who were charged with the public reading of the Scriptures. They were already mentioned by Tertullian about the year 200,¹⁵ also by an apparently earlier inscription in the Roman cemetery of St. Agnes,¹⁶ and earlier still perhaps, by St. Justin.¹⁷ But in the degree that the Christian communities developed, these had to provide themselves with the organs necessary for their functioning. As the authorities hesitated, at least in many of these communities, to increase the number of deacons which had been fixed by the Apostles, it became necessary to institute other clerics, to whom the deacons could hand on less important functions. In this way were created the subdeacons, ὑποδιάκονοι,

¹² Council of Neocæsarea, canon 15.

¹³ Cf. *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 149.

¹⁴ Cf. *infra*, p. 1130. See also p. 1140, the case of Pope Dionysius.

¹⁵ *De præscriptione*, xli.

¹⁶ De Rossi, *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, Vol. IX, 1871, p. 31.

¹⁷ *Apology*, I, lxvii.

immediate auxiliaries of the deacons, to whom they were expressly subordinated; ¹⁸ also the acolytes, not found in the Greek Church, but who seem in the West to have had the mission of helping the subdeacons, who may have become too few for their tasks if their number had, like that of the deacons, been at first limited to seven; then the exorcists, *ἐξορκισταί*, entrusted with the mission of liberating those possessed by devils; and finally the porters, *ostiarii*, *πυλωροί*, who guarded the doors of the church. We find all these offices established in Rome in 251, according to a letter from Pope Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch inserted in Eusebius's *History*.¹⁹ But the developed state of this body of auxiliaries of the higher clergy at that moment leads us to think that it cannot have been an altogether recent institution. A document of 303 ²⁰ names a last order, that of the diggers, *fossores*, *κοπιᾶται*, who have left no further trace as an element of the ecclesiastical hierarchy after the fourth century. In the great cities, the instruction of catechumens was confided to catechists, or *doctores audientium*.

§ 3. TERRITORIAL DIVISION OF CHURCHES BEGINNINGS OF PAROCHIAL ORGANISATION

With the increasing diffusion of the Christian faith, new communities began to arise in the neighbourhood of the great cities, in lesser towns, and even, at least in some parts of the East like Asia Minor, where Christianity was more forward, in rural centres also. Religious life in these places had to be assured, and this required the appointment of clergy. Several solutions seem to have been offered for the problem thus presented by the extension of the Gospel of the Kingdom beyond the limits in which it was necessarily confined when it was first preached.

Territorial Unity of the Church. The Principal Church and the Secondary Centres

Adhering to the conception and primitive practice whereby there was no church without a bishop, sole depositary of the priesthood

¹⁸ 'Τηρητέαι εἰσι διακόνων' (*Apostolic Constitutions*, viii, 28).

¹⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii.

²⁰ *Gesta purificationis Cæciliani* (Migne, P.L., Vol. VIII, 731). Two laws of the Emperor Constantius (*Cod. Theod.*, XIII, i, 1, and XVI, 2, 15) expressly include the *copiatæ* among the clergy.

and the one minister of liturgical life as a whole, a particular Christian community naturally found it necessary quite early to determine its territorial limits. It was necessary that the faithful who dwelt in the various parts of this territory should be able, without having to make a long journey, to visit the principal church in which were celebrated the chief offices of worship presided over by the bishop. Even so, within this territory itself there were formed, as needs dictated, secondary districts under the control of priests. But the assemblies over which these presided had at first a catechetical rather than a properly religious character, and so it sometimes happened that a simple deacon fulfilled this office. The circumstances we have already mentioned brought about a further development, whereby the various priests came to take the place of the bishop to a certain extent in the portion of ecclesiastical territory placed in their care, and these districts became so many "parishes."

This first arrangement was made quite naturally in the suburbs of great cities, whence the faithful could easily get to the central church, and which the bishop could himself visit with sufficient ease. Thus, the district of Mareotis in Egypt, which possessed an important number of priests, remained towards the end of the third century an ecclesiastical dependency of Alexandria, governed directly by the bishop of that city.¹

The activity of these priests, set, as needs required, over various parts of an episcopal diocese possessing Christian groups outside the urban agglomeration which formed its centre, could be exercised in two different ways. The priests might be residents, or itinerant or visiting clergy.

Visiting or Travelling Priests in some Regions

Those belonging to the itinerant category were given the name of *periodontai* or, in Latin, *circumeuntes*. A letter of St. Phileas, Bishop of Thmuis in Lower Egypt, written about 307,² and the 57th of the Laodicean Canons, which are of uncertain date,³ mention their existence. We gather from the first of these texts that St.

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 1109.

² Migne, P.G., Vol. X, 1566.

³ On the Canons of Laodicea, cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*. The 57th Canon of Laodicea deals with a situation which may have been posterior to the fourth century.

Phileas regarded the ministry of these visiting priests as sufficient for the spiritual needs of Christians living away from the seat of the bishop, and did not consider it necessary to install among them priests with fixed posts.

Elsewhere, Residential Priests. Beginnings of the Parochial Organization

On the other hand, in cases where Christians were found at fairly considerable distances from an episcopal see, and no other bishop was placed at their head—a situation which seems to have lasted till the middle of the third century in Upper Italy and in Gaul⁴ (where the Christians of Autun and of Châlons-sur-Saône, for instance, depended at first on the Bishop of Lyons)—we may well believe that it became necessary to appoint residential priests; hence these *παροίκιαι* or parishes in Gaul mentioned by Eusebius.⁵ But it is not impossible that this organization of the parochial system may have begun before the fourth century, even among Christian communities much nearer to the episcopal centre. For instance, it is difficult to say whether the priests of the Mareotis were *circumeuntes* or country parish priests.⁶

Again, we are unable to determine the precise time and conditions of the transformation of these ministers, at first charged mainly with catechetical instruction, preparation for the sacraments, and preaching, into liturgical ministers, celebrating the Holy Sacrifice in the churches of small towns and villages just as the bishop did in his cathedral. We have already said that the great persecutions of the third century must have helped to bring about this result, by depriving churches of their bishops often for fairly lengthy periods. But even prior to that time, we find it difficult to imagine that priests charged with the care of new Christian communities as far distant from the episcopal seat as Autun, for instance, was from Lyons, did not already celebrate the sacred mysteries.

In such a case, the continuance of the regime whereby simple priests were put at the head of Christian communities in towns far away from the episcopal see was doubtless due to the numerical weakness of these Christian groups. As soon as they began to in-

⁴ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 774 *et seq.* and 783-785.

⁵ Cf. Bk. III, p. 774.

⁶ Cf. the discussion in Ch. de Smedt, *L'organisation des églises chrétiennes au IIIe siècle*, in *Revue des Questions historiques*, Vol. L, 1891-1892, pp. 410 *et seq.*

crease, it would be natural and almost obligatory that they should be given a bishop of their own, and in this way we should tend towards the system which seems to have been established in Gaul from the fourth century, namely, a bishop for each city, though this did not necessarily involve a strict correspondence in the geographical arrangements of the civil and ecclesiastical administrations.

In other Countries, a Multiplication of Bishoprics

Side by side with the institution of the itinerant clergy and priests with fixed posts, we find another way of ensuring the spiritual life of communities outside the urban centres (provided these were sufficiently important in themselves or by reason of their Christian population to be raised at an early stage into episcopal sees), namely, the multiplication of bishoprics. We find this in peninsular Italy, and still more in Africa where, if not in the third century at least beginning with the fourth, there was an almost incredible number of episcopal sees: Councils called on the occasion of the Donatist schism after the Diocletian persecution⁷ reveal several hundred bishops in a territory smaller than Gaul. Bishops were thus found in very small towns and even in mere villages. Nevertheless by the powers they exercised within their modest boundaries they were equal to the bishops of the greatest cities.

The Chorepiscopi

In other countries, as in various provinces in Asia, the bishops of localities altogether secondary, and the rural bishops, were not unreasonably regarded as of inferior rank. Their relative lowliness was expressed by a special name given to them, that of "country bishops" or *chorepiscopi*, χωρας ἐπισκοποι, ἐπισκοποι ἐν ταῖς κώραις, ἢ ταῖς χώραις, as they are called in conciliar texts.⁸ They are evidently identical with the ἐπισκοποι τῶν ἀγρῶν mentioned by Eusebius.⁹ The earliest to be mentioned is a certain Zoticus, Bishop of

⁷ Cf. *infra*, p. 1203, and *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

⁸ Council of Antioch of 341, Canon 10. On the *chorepiscopi*, cf. Dom Parisot, *Les chorévêques*, in *Revue de l'Orient chrétien*, Vol. VI, 1901, pp. 157 *et seq.*; P. M. Jugie, *Les chorévêques en Orient*, in *Echos d'Orient*, Vol. VII, 1904, pp. 263 *et seq.*; H. Bergère, *Étude historique sur les chorévêques*, Paris, 1905, and above all F. Gillmann, *Das Institut der Chorbischofe im Orient. Historisch-kanonistische Studie, in Veröffentlichungen aus dem Kirchenhistorischen Seminar*, 2nd series, fasc. 1, Munich, 1903.

⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx.

the village of Kumana in Phrygia, named by Eusebius in his account of the beginnings of Montanism (second half of the second century).¹⁰

It is true, of course, that apart from the difference in name, the *chorepiscopi* of these early times were bishops no less than the others, and those of the villages of Asia Minor and Syria had more or less the same position as the bishops of the African villages, or the bishops set over the small towns in the immediate neighbourhood of Rome, hence called "suburbican" sees.¹¹ Nevertheless it is probable that the *chorepiscopi* were from the first subordinate to the bishop of the city which was the centre of the territory a portion of which they governed.

A day was bound to come very soon when it was considered that these rural bishops, too numerous perhaps to offer in every case sufficient guarantees of their worth, might lower the religious prestige of the episcopate, and their powers were progressively diminished by a series of Councils in the fourth century. Eventually they ceased to possess the episcopal character, and this was a prelude to the total suppression of the institution.¹²

Two Chief Types of Organisation. Countries with many Bishoprics, and Countries with a Parochial Organisation

Henceforward there will only be two types of ecclesiastical organisation in the various churches. Some countries like Africa and peninsular Italy will always display a superabundance of bishoprics,

¹⁰ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 17.

¹¹ The title of *chorepiscopus* was only exceptionally used in Christian antiquity in the West. A *chorepiscopus* Eugraphus figures in an inscription of Salona, *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*, III, 9547, and the Council of Riez in Gaul in 439 reduced to the status of *chorepiscopus* a certain Armentarius who had been consecrated Bishop of Embrun contrary to the canons; but this title merely gave him precedence over other priests. Cf. J. Zeiller, *Le chorévêque Eugraphus, Note sur le choréépiscopat en Occident au V. siècle*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, Vol. VII, 1906, pp. 27 et seq. We find, however, in connection with the quarrel which broke out about the year 400 between the episcopal sees of Southern Gaul, that very small places in the region of Marseilles, Gargonius and Citharista, had bishops depending on that of the neighbouring great city. These may have been *chorepiscopi* without the name. On these conflicts see *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*. *Chorepiscopi* reappeared in Frankish Gaul in the Carolingian period, but these *chorepiscopi* were rather co-bishops, coadjutors of the bishop who was the head of the diocese. On *chorepiscopi* in the West, cf. Th. Gottlob, *Der abendlandische Chorepiskopat*, in *Kanonistische Studien und Texte*, herausgeg. von A. Koeniger, Vol. I, Bonn, 1928.

¹² Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

episcopal sees being installed in very small towns, but not in mere villages. Elsewhere there will be fewer bishoprics, as in Upper Italy, Gaul, Britain, Spain, Illyricum, and under the authority of bishops thus possessing a more extensive territorial jurisdiction we shall find a multiplication of simple parishes entrusted to priests. In several countries things tend towards the establishment of a bishop in each civil city, as was the case, though not without exception, in Gaul from the fourth century. But there was never strict correspondence between the civil and religious organisation, and certainly this was not to be found at the end of the third century. And even in this same third century we find in Spain one single bishop governing the faithful of the two churches of Legio (Leon) and Asturica (Astorga).¹³ The Province of Scythia, which contained several cities, never possessed any bishop besides that of the provincial capital, Tomi. In the "European" province in Thrace, there were at the beginning of the fifth century only four bishops, each governing the Christian population of two cities.¹⁴

§ 4. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CHURCHES BROTHERHOOD AND RANK

The Mother Churches

It was natural that the bishops of small places, instituted originally by the bishop of more important urban centres, should remain in a certain relation of subordination to the latter, and this might lead one to think that the same would apply in a more general way to every daughter church, even when established in a large town, in relation to its mother church. But in reality the mother church retained rather a moral pre-eminence. Yet sometimes its bishop functioned to a certain point as the head of the episcopate in that particular region. Such was the Bishop of Carthage in relation to the Church of Africa. But this was not the case everywhere. In general, we may say that in the third century we still find the idea of a brotherhood of churches rather than that of a hierarchical system. This brotherhood continued to express itself in exchanges of letters, *litteræ formatæ*, in various circumstances, by which the churches testified that they were in communion with one another.

¹³ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 780, 794.

¹⁴ Cf. the list of bishops at the Council of Ephesus.

Necessity of an Organic Connection

It was very necessary, however, that their mutual relations should be regulated in some manner. In point of fact, we find during the first four centuries in the history of the Church various attempts, some more or less deliberate and others more or less spontaneous, from the human point of view, to express in some concrete way this bond between the churches, in order to show their basic unity, and even to realise this organically.

The Councils

One of the modes of unification, or more exactly perhaps, one of the most natural external manifestations of the pre-existing invisible unity, would be the meeting together of representatives of different churches assembling to discuss questions which called for an exchange of ideas, and in some cases, common decisions. In point of fact, the first councils or synods known to history were the result of the Montanist heresy. "The faithful of Asia," wrote Apollinaris of Hierapolis, quoted by Eusebius,¹ "assembled often, in numerous parts of this country: they examined the recent doings of the innovators, showed their profane character, and after condemning the heresy they expelled the innovators from the church and denied them communion." The rest of the account of Eusebius shows us that bishops assembled also in Thrace in order to excommunicate the Montanists.² This took place in the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

Fifteen or twenty years later, the Paschal controversy led to new episcopal assemblies. Eusebius tells us³ that there was still extant in his day the synodical letters of the following: the bishops of Palestine gathered together under the presidency of Theophilus of Cæsarea and Narcissus of Jerusalem;⁴ the bishops assembled at Rome under Pope Victor; the bishops of Pontus presided over by Palmas; the Christian communities of Gaul which, it is true, apart from the Narbonnaise apparently had at that time no bishop besides Irenæus; the bishops of Osrhoene; the Greek episcopate; and that of Asia which, as we know,⁵ continued for a time to defend its own view concerning the celebration of Easter.

¹ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi, 10.

² *Ibid.*, V, xix, 3-4.

³ *Hist. eccles.*, V, xxiii, 2.

⁴ Cf. Bk. III, p. 764.

⁵ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 717 *et seq.*

In the third century also synods were called, especially in order to settle problems arising out of the persecution or the appearance of heresies. We find them, for instance, in Italy, under the presidency of the Roman bishop, and also in Africa, where the bishops were grouped around the Bishop of Carthage, as they may have been since before the end of the second century.⁶ About the year 300, the Council of Elvira was held in Spain: we infer this approximate date from the fact that several of the members of the Council were present also at that of Arles in 314, and that Hosius of Cordova, who died a centenarian in 357, was likewise there.⁷ The disciplinary canons enacted at Elvira, the earliest we possess, do not indicate that they deal with cases peculiar to the Spanish Church, but rather seem to set forth rules applying to Christians as a whole, though in point of fact this Council legislated only for Spain.

Thus, until the fourth century there was no general or œcumenical council formed of representatives of the whole Church. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine an assembly of this kind taking place previous to the peace of the Church: the first œcumenical council will be that of Nicæa under the Emperor Constantine. Until then we know only of provincial or regional councils, but these tended, at least in some parts of the Church, to become a regular institution. We see from the correspondence exchanged between St. Cyprian of Carthage and St. Firmilian of Cæsarea on the occasion of the baptismal controversy that in several countries such as Africa or Asia Minor, the bishops of particular provinces were accustomed in the third century to meet together in council annually, or even twice a year.

We must also add that when questions arose which concerned the whole Church, agreement could be manifested by the provincial synods held everywhere simultaneously in order to deal with the same subject. Thus the synods held because of the Easter controversy brought out the unanimous view of the churches, with the

⁶ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 780-782, pp. 850-851, and *infra*, pp. 1136 *et seq.*

⁷ Contrary to what has been sometimes said, there is nothing in the canons of Elvira to indicate that they were enacted immediately after a persecution. Cf. L. Duchesne, *Le concile d'Elvire et les flamines chrétiens*, in *Mélanges Renier*, Paris, 1887 (*Bibliothèque de l'Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes, Section des Sc. hist. et philolog.*, fasc. 73, pp. 159-173). There is an abundant literature on the Council of Elvira, particulars of which will be found, prior to 1907, in Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, Vol. I, p. 212, n. 4. The *History of P. Garcia Villada, Historia ecclesiastica de España*, II: *El cristianismo durante la dominacion romana*, adds nothing of interest.

exception of those of Asia. True, there arose then the difficulty of bringing the latter to adopt the practice which had prevailed everywhere else, and this result was not produced by means of councils. The provincial synods could usefully act as a guide to the Church, but they themselves needed the control and sanction of a higher authority if and when they did not succeed of themselves to ensure unity.

Beginnings of Hierarchical System: de facto Primacies and Future Metropolitan Sees

In various regions, on the other hand, some spontaneous attempts at a hierarchical organisation indicate a certain realisation of ecclesiastical unity in territories of more or less considerable extent, but nevertheless always limited. Churches which owed their foundation to another naturally attributed to the latter a certain superiority, but as a mother church was very often situated in the most important city in the province which had naturally been the object of its missionary efforts, the position of these mother churches naturally coincided with the metropolitan cities of the provinces. This prepared the way for the institution of metropolitan sees, which incidentally do not seem to have been established as an actual and official institution before the fourth century, and even then only in the East at first. The bishop of the chief city of the province, *ἐπαρχία*, was the metropolitan, who had a pre-eminence over his colleagues in other cities, with the right to confirm their election and often the prerogative of conferring episcopal consecration upon them. We gather from the proceedings of councils that in some countries this supremacy was exercised, not by the bishop of the provincial metropolis, but by the oldest in age or office among the bishops of the province, and to him was given the name of "primate." This was the case in Northern Africa (except in the Proconsular Province, where the primate was always the bishop of the metropolis, Carthage), in Bithynia, at least for some time, and perhaps also in Spain.⁸

⁸ It may be that it is these primates or seniors, the oldest in age or episcopate—unless indeed it is the antiquity of the see itself which is in question—who are envisaged in canon 58 of the Council of Elvira, which lays it down that the verification of letters of communion of representatives of a church, in course of a journey, is to be made above all by the first episcopal see—"maxime in eo loco in quo prima cathedra constituta est episcopatus." This "prima cathedra

But equally there began to be formed some more extended ecclesiastical groupings, and these were doubtless due both to the circumstances of evangelisation and to the geographical and administrative conditions with which they were connected. Thus the different provinces of Northern Africa, and no longer the single Proconsular Province only, were grouped under the higher authority of the first bishop in this province, namely the Bishop of Carthage, whom we find from the third century always presiding over the regional synods consisting of bishops of his own province, Numidia and Mauretania.⁹ All Egypt and Cyrenaica, which comprised several civil provinces, depended upon the Bishop of Alexandria, and peninsular Italy on the Bishop of Rome. Antioch seems similarly to have had a preponderant position in the whole East apart from Asia Minor, for in 325 the Council of Nicæa recognised this state of affairs,¹⁰ as it recognised also the position of the Bishop of Alexandria, mentioning in this connection the traditional prerogatives of Rome.¹¹ These sees superior to the provincial metropolitans will later on be called patriarchates in the case of the greatest, and exarchates or primacies in the case of the lesser.

episcopatus" seems to correspond to the "prima sedes," the seat of the senior bishop of the province of Africa. P. Batiffol, *La prima cathedra episcopatus du concile d'Elvire*, in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, Vol. XXIII, 1922, pp. 263 *et seq.*, and Vol. XXVI, 1925, pp. 45 *et seq.*, has endeavored to prove that the "prima cathedra episcopatus" signifies the see of Rome, in accordance with the expression we find in the Spanish fifth century poet, Prudentius, who, speaking of the apostle Peter in *Peristephanon*, II, 459, says: "cathedram possidens primam." But this interpretation seems to go beyond the ecclesiastical perspectives of the Council of Elvira, which, moreover, does not display any preoccupation with the central authority or with a first episcopal see of the universal Church. Furthermore, if Rome was envisaged, why the use of this expression, which seems capable of signifying several places? Cf. against Batiffol, A. Jullicher, *Die Synode von Elvira als Zeuge für den römischen Primat*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. XLII, 1923, pp. 44 *et seq.*, and L. von Sybel, *Die Synode von Elvira*, *ibid.*, pp. 243 *et seq.* The latter even sees opposition to Rome in canon 36 of the Council against images, an opposition which moreover, according to Batiffol, would not exclude a recognition of the Roman primacy viewed as a primacy of foundation.

⁹ St. Cyprian himself refused to allow that there is any hierarchy among bishops: his opening discourse at the Council of Carthage in 256 (*Sententiæ episcoporum numero LXXXVII de hæreticis baptizandis*, ed. Hartel in *Vienna Corpus*, Vol. III, 1-2; *Cyprian, op.*, 1-2, p. 435) is very clear in this sense. But his theoretical declarations, though perfectly sincere, are one thing, and his actual practice, resulting almost from the force of events themselves, is another. In point of fact the Bishop of Carthage always acted as the head of the African episcopate.

¹⁰ Canon 6.

¹¹ Ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῷ ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ τοῦτο συνηθὲς ἐστίν.

Elsewhere we do not find in the course of the third century a tendency towards a similar hierarchical arrangement of bishoprics. In Celtic Gaul, the see of Lyons seems not to have retained all the importance which it had in the nature of things by reason of its original position, although we find about the year 250 the Bishop of Lyons acting as the representative of the episcopate of his province.¹² In the Narbonne country, in the same period, no see seems to have held a preponderating place. When, on the occasion of the Novatian schism in the middle of the third century, a Bishop of Arles was deposed, his Gallic colleagues showed a readiness to let Rome intervene directly in his replacement, a very significant indication of the absence of any superior episcopal authority in their own country.¹³

In brief, before the peace of the Church, the provincial organisation was still somewhat loose; it was in a nascent state, and would develop by a natural evolution.

¹² Cf. *infra*, pp. 1136-1137.

¹³ Cf. *infra*, p. 1137.

THE ROMAN SEE¹

AS YET, no general council of the Church had been called, and hence above the provincial organisation we have just described, there was only "the very lively sentiment of Christian unity, and the special authority of the Roman Church"² which constituted an expression of this.

It was an authority felt rather than defined, in the first place. But we have seen how it had taken shape already in the first two centuries, and had been recognised by prominent witnesses to Christian thought and feeling.

The history of the Church of Rome from the end of the second century to the beginning of the fourth will show us how its authority developed.

§ 1. THE PAPACY FROM VICTOR TO CALLISTUS

Pope Victor

Already in the pontificate of the immediate successor to Pope Eleutherius, Pope Victor (189-199), the activity of the Roman See had a prominence which, apart from the intervention of St. Clement at Corinth,³ had not been specially manifested previously. The pontificate of Victor was a very important one. It was then that Greek ceased to be the sole official language of the Roman Church.

¹ Bibliography.—The same as for ch. XI, augmented by the works mentioned in the notes to the present chapter.

[To these works we must add *The Church and the Papacy: A Historical Study*, being the Bampton Lectures given at the University of Oxford in 1942, by the Rev. T. G. Jalland, D.D. (London, S.P.C.K., 1944). This is noteworthy because it is characterised by a very close approach to the traditional Catholic positions, in the matter of the evidence from Scripture and early Tradition for the supreme authority of Peter and his successors in the See of Rome. Thus, on the much discussed question of St. Cyprian's attitude to the Primacy, Dr. Jalland accepts the conclusions reached by Fr. Bévenot in his recent study of the Cyprianic MSS. concerning the priority of the "Roman" text of the *De unitate*. He holds also that the weaker text is equally authentic, and that the modification was due to the disagreement with Pope Stephen on the baptismal controversy. Dr. Jalland's work should be consulted for details on this and other features of the development of the authority of the Roman See in the early Church.—Tr.]

² Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 536.

³ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 412, 488-490.

It was gradually replaced by Latin, which Victor himself wrote,⁴ being perhaps of African origin.⁵ This fact itself shows the progress of the Latin element in the Christian community in Rome, which had hitherto been more Greek or Oriental than Latin. The growing influence of the Latin spirit is also shown in the progress of the Church's organisation, as shown in the Roman synods summoned on the occasion of the affair of Theodotus and of the Easter question,⁶ and also in the relations with the other churches, many of which held councils at the request of the Roman bishop. In short, this pontificate was an epoch-making one, and we may say that with Victor, more than with any of his predecessors, the Roman bishop already acts as Pope.

The strong and even somewhat severe manner in which he tried to compel the Asiatics to adopt the Roman usage in fixing the date of the Easter celebration, which was also that of the majority of churches, led to opposition and difficulties, as we have already explained,⁷ but even so it gives us a clear indication of the idea the Roman bishop already had of his own right—a right which he regarded as naturally resulting from a duty—to give to the collectivity of churches general directions in matters of discipline as in matters of faith. Already at the end of the second century Rome shows a consciousness of its mission, which it carries out with a directness and a sense of sureness which are altogether striking.

Against this, it is true, we must mention the very definite protests to which the action of Victor gave rise. But, as we have been able to show, these voices were raised in the name of charity and for the sake of brotherhood, the sense of which was so vivid in the Church of these early times, and they did not deny Rome's right to act, either because they did not take this into consideration but regarded the matter from another point of view, or else because they did not question it.

Zephyrinus and Callistus. The Theological Controversies

Victor's successor, Pope Zephyrinus (199-217), and the Pope who in turn succeeded him, Callistus (217-222), who seems to have

⁴ St. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, liii, regards Victor as the first of the Christian Latin writers.

⁵ According to the *Liber Pontificalis*.

⁶ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 722, 728 *et seq.*

⁷ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 722 *et seq.*

been originally his chief deacon, were opposed, this time from the standpoint of doctrine, by the leader of the Roman clergy who had devoted himself to theological studies and had philosophised on dogma, the priest St. Hippolytus.⁸ But it was precisely the peculiar character of his own speculations which put him in opposition to the two Popes, who were guardians of pure doctrine by reason of their office, and who refused to interpret this doctrine in accordance with the ideas of a particular school. We have already seen⁹ that in the theological conflicts which had begun to take place at this time, resulting from discussions on the Trinity, and in opposition both to the Monarchians who stressed the divine unity, and to the champions of the doctrine of the Logos, who emphasized the distinction of persons but usually displayed a tendency towards Subordinationism, Zephyrinus and Callistus, rightly fearing these tendencies, were not willing to pronounce in favour of the doctrine of the Logos as it was then being formulated. Hippolytus considered that in acting thus, or rather in abstaining from action, the two Roman bishops had not defended the true faith as they should have done; he made a schism, and criticised his opponents in the book which has been called, though wrongly, the *Philosophumena*.¹⁰

It is certainly noteworthy that when, after the death of Zephyrinus, Callistus and Hippolytus were rival candidates for the succession, Callistus won the day. Hippolytus was forced to become an anti-pope. He had on his side the reputation of his learning and his literary gifts, and perhaps also his own personal position. Nevertheless the Church gave its preference to a freedman, much less cultivated but at the same time a confessor, a strong man and a good administrator.

Callistus, however (if we are to believe Hippolytus, who had no good word for him), had had a somewhat stormy past, which may have cost him some votes. As an old slave, he had carried out for his master certain transactions which had not turned out well; being in difficulties with his creditors, he had turned on his own debtors, among whom there were some Jews; these had denounced him as a Christian, and in consequence he had been sent to the mines in

⁸ Cf. A. d'Alès, *La théologie de saint Hippolyte*, Paris, 1906, and Vol. III, p. 578, n. 4.

⁹ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 730 *et seq.*

¹⁰ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 735 *et seq.*

Sardinia. Returning from imprisonment when peace was re-established under Commodus, he had lived in retreat at Antium. Pope Zephyrinus, who had doubtless recognised his abilities in spite of all that had happened, had caused him to return and had made him chief deacon. Being thus charged with the temporal administration of the Church, he transferred the official cemetery of the Roman community from the neighbourhood of the Via Salaria (where the Acilii Glabrones had put their land at the disposal of their brethren,¹¹ and where there had been formed what was called after that time the Catacomb of Priscilla) to the crypts of Lucina on the Appian Way.¹² This cemetery, which had been increased by his care, was called after him the "cemetery of Callistus," although he was not himself buried there like his successors. It was also called "the cemetery," because it became the chief one of the Roman Christian community.

Having become Pope after Zephyrinus, and having been in this way preferred to Hippolytus, Callistus was bound to meet with still stronger opposition from his rival. The opposition developed into a schism, which was nevertheless brought to an end by a common persecution. After the pontificate of Callistus, his successor Pontian was deported into Sardinia, in virtue of the edict of Maximin the Thracian, at the same time as Hippolytus himself. The two confessors were reconciled to each other, and Hippolytus was honoured as a martyr. His memory was cherished in the church of Rome, and Christians there retained a statue which his admirers had erected to him during his lifetime.¹³

This reconciliation, which put an end to the schism, may be regarded as a retraction on the part of Hippolytus, who had not only separated from the legitimate bishop but had accused him of not safeguarding the faith. His return to unity seems to imply a withdrawal of his accusations. But should we infer from these accusations that, for Hippolytus, the Pope might err in matters doctrinal? Our information concerning Hippolytus does not settle the question formulated in such precise terms, which correspond indeed to a state of development of Christian thought later than his time. Moreover, Hippolytus reproached Zephyrinus and Callistus less for

¹¹ Cf. Bk. II, p. 524.

¹² Cf. *ibid.*

¹³ It can be seen in the Lateran Museum. But the head is modern.

explicit errors than for their silence and passivity in presence of doctrines which he himself regarded as pernicious, or else for their reserve towards doctrines which he himself regarded as correct.¹⁴

The Disciplinary Conflict

Callistus, indeed, was the subject of attacks by Hippolytus for another reason. As he had moderated the early severity of penitential discipline,¹⁵ a rigorist opposition accused him through the mouth of Hippolytus of an unworthy weakness. Tertullian, with his usual asperity, took part in this attack upon the supposed laxity of Rome, although the *episcopus episcoporum* and the *summus pontifex* to whom he ironically refers¹⁶ may perhaps designate not Callistus but the Bishop of Carthage, Agrippinus, who had adopted the same disciplinary practice. Despite the violence of a few opponents, the indulgent attitude of Rome, which in any case did not amount to laxity, prevailed everywhere. Tertullian indeed might, in the Montanist phase of his career, in which the true Church was for him no longer the hierarchical one but the Church of the spirituals, deny that the hierarchy possessed the power of binding and loosing. But that was the denial of a man who no longer belonged to the "great Church."

Nevertheless, an attempt has been made to find in this, by a kind of unexpected reaction, the starting point for the claim to the primacy on the part of the bishops of Rome. Such is the paradoxical thesis recently set forth by Erich Caspar in his *Geschichte des Papsttums*,¹⁷ who traces back to the polemics which followed the edict of Callistus Rome's belief in her own superior authority. Tertullian, attacking the edict in his *De pudicitia*, says in ch. xxi that the bishop had arrogated to himself the power of loosing because he thought that the words addressed to Peter applied to himself. Tertullian rejects the application, refusing as a Montanist, for such he was already, the power of binding and loosing to the Church represented by the episcopate, and attributing it only to the Church of the spirituals. According to Caspar, however, the reasoning at

¹⁴ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 735 *et seq.*

¹⁵ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 709 *et seq.*, and A. d'Alès, *L'Edit de Calliste* indicated *ibid.*

¹⁶ Cf. Bk. III, p. 710.

¹⁷ Vol. I, pp. 26-27.

tributed by Tertullian to Callistus sufficed to give to Rome, which did not previously possess it, the idea of a primacy founded upon the succession of the Roman bishops from St. Peter.

What an arbitrary hypothesis! In the passage of the *De pudicitia* referred to there is nothing to show that Tertullian attributed to Callistus, if he is really the person referred to,¹⁸ a fictitious argument, or that he did more than state quite simply that Callistus appealed definitely to the *Tu es Petrus* and to the power of loosing entrusted to Peter.¹⁹ Also, it seems *a priori* very unlikely, to say no more, and to use no other arguments, that Rome, in which the memory of the Apostle was kept so much alive, had to learn from Africa that the *Tu es Petrus* had placed it in possession of a special authority of which Peter was the source.

¹⁸ One of the texts most discussed in connection with the famous penitential edict is a passage in the *De pudicitia* (xxi, 9), in which Tertullian, addressing the bishop he is criticising, says. "Si, quia dixerat Petro Dominus: 'Super hanc petram . . .' vel: 'Quæcumque alligaveris' . . . idcirco præsumis et ad te derivasse solvendi et alligandi potestatem, id est, ad omnem ecclesiam Petri propinquam . . ." This phrase seems to P. Galtier (*Le véritable édit de Calliste*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclési.*, Vol. XXIII, 1927, pp. 465 et seq.) to exclude the identification of the author of the edict with a direct successor of St. Peter, inasmuch as it seems to refer to a church related, like all (omnem ecclesiam) those which conserve the apostolic faith, to that of Peter. But Harnack (*Ecclesia Petri propinqua: Zur geschichte der Anfänge des Primats des römischen Bischofs*, in *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philos.-histor. (Klasse Vol. XVIII, 1927, pp. 139 et seq.) has suggested an ingenious correction: "ad romanam ecclesiam Petri propinquam." In this hypothesis, there would indeed be question of the Roman Church itself, which is "near to Peter" because established near his tomb. And this would be yet another affirmation, and a very interesting one, of the tradition concerning the Roman burial of St. Peter. But this rather materialistic interpretation of "Petri propinqua," as P. Galtier has pointed out in another article (*Ecclesia Petri propinqua. A propos de Tertullien et de Calliste*, in *Revue d'hist. ecclési.*, Vol. XXIV, 1928, pp. 40 et seq.), is scarcely in harmony with the spirit of Tertullian; the conception of a spiritual connection between all churches which have conserved the faith of Peter is more likely to be correct, and has the additional advantage of not depending on a correction of the text, a proceeding to which we should have recourse only when compelled to do so.

¹⁹ It is interesting to notice that Caspar's theory found an immediate and resolute critic in a writer who nevertheless is one of the most convinced opponents of the Roman primacy. Hugo Koch, a specialist, if we may use the term, on St. Cyprian, whose difficult texts he always interprets in the sense of an episcopalianism altogether opposed to any conception of the supremacy of the Roman See. In his *Cathedra Petri* (Giessen, 1930) Koch expressly rejects the hypothesis of the so-called argument attributed by Tertullian to Callistus, which the Roman Church is supposed to have appropriated, and he concludes that the *De pudicitia* has nothing to do with the origins of the Roman primacy.

Prestige of the Roman See

In any case, the vehement attacks which men like Hippolytus or Tertullian directed against the Roman bishops, who were accused of not showing themselves sufficiently vigorous in the defence of the faith or of morals, and were criticised even for decisions agreeable to the spirit of the Gospel, such as that by which Callistus recognised as valid in the eyes of the Church marriages of women of senatorial rank with freedmen,²⁰ constitute in reality a species of homage rendered to the authority of the Roman See, which these Popes were accused of compromising. The epoch in which these significant accusations were made was also that in which another kind of testimony was rendered to the Roman See. St. Zephyrinus might be a man of mediocre intellect: yet Origen nevertheless made a journey to Rome to visit him,²¹ experiencing like so many others the attraction of the centre of ecclesiastical life of the Christian world.

Naturally he saw there Hippolytus also, and he even heard a homily given by him before his secession from the Church. This schism did not take place until the time of Callistus, as we have seen,²² but it continued after his death. Callistus died in 222, under Alexander Severus, in a period of peace for the Church. Nevertheless he has been included among the martyred popes.²³ Did he perish "in some scuffle between Christians and pagans, not as a result of any regular process? His memory was localised in Rome, from the first half of the fourth century, in two places: in the Trastevere, where Pope Julius built a basilica, *Sancta Maria in Trastevere juxta Callistum*, and on the Aurelian Way, where his tomb is found. It is strange that he should be buried there, so far from the cemetery administered by him, which still bears his name and which received the mortal remains of all his colleagues of the third century. The popular tumult which may explain his death might also explain, if we accept the tradition of the legend which puts the incident in the Trastevere, the reason why he was buried on the Aurelian Way. For that would be the cemetery nearest the place where he was put to death, according to the story."²⁴

²⁰ Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, IX, 11.

²¹ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xiv, 10.

²² Cf. *supra*, p. 1124.

²³ He appears under the 14th Oct., in the Philocalian Table of the *Depositiones martyrum*.

²⁴ Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 320, note.

§ 2. THE PAPACY FROM CALLISTUS TO SIXTUS II

Pope Urban I

Callistus was succeeded by Urban, whose pontificate lasted from 222 to 230.¹ According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, it was characterised by the institution of the twenty-five presbyteral "titles" in Rome; but in the absence of any confirmation of this from any other source, we can only hesitate, to say no more, to accept a statement which has no better guarantee.

Pope Pontian

Pontian, who succeeded Urban, was, together with Hippolytus still functioning as an anti-pope, involved in the persecution of Maximin which brought about their reconciliation. They were both condemned to the mines of Sardinia, and died there after they had made peace with each other. Hippolytus in his last moments exhorted his followers to join the rest of the faithful. The bodies of these two leaders were taken back to Rome and buried there on the same day, Pontian in the cemetery of Callistus in the crypt of the popes, and Hippolytus on the Via Tiburtina.

The pontificate of Pontian was followed by that of Anteros, nominated during the lifetime of his predecessor, who had had to surrender his office when removed from Rome (235).² Anteros was very soon persecuted in his turn and condemned to death, even before Pontian had succumbed to the rigours of his imprisonment.³

Pope Fabian

His successor, Fabian, who, according to one account, was miraculously pointed out to the Christian electors by a dove which alighted on his head,⁴ remained longer in charge—in fact until 250, when he died a martyr's death in the Decian persecution.⁵ His pontificate was an eventful one in the history of the Church. We find no trace in his time of the schism of Hippolytus. Fabian was

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxiii.

² According to the *Chronicle* of Hippolytus.

³ Cf. *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. ci.

⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxix.

⁵ Cf. Bk. III, p. 794.

able to labour in peace in the organic development of the Christian community of Rome. According to the *Liberian Catalogue*, he was responsible for the institution of the seven deaconries, which were entrusted with the ecclesiastical administration of the city,⁶ and also of the seven subdeacons destined to relieve the deacons of a part of a ministry which they could no longer fulfil themselves.⁷ Two incidents which took place during his episcopate bring new proofs of the pre-eminent authority of the Roman See in the Church. The Bishop of Lambesa in Africa had professed doctrines which were regarded as opposed to the faith, and this led to his condemnation for heresy by an African council. His teaching evoked not only a severe letter from the Bishop of Carthage, but also one from Pope Fabian.⁸ Origen, moreover, had been likewise accused of heterodoxy, and had been condemned by his bishop, Demetrius of Alexandria, though mainly because of the irregularity of his ordination to the priesthood, and this condemnation had been supported by a Roman synod assembled by Pontian. Origen thereupon addressed a doctrinal apology to Fabian to justify himself.⁹

Pope Cornelius. Difficulties in Rome

The election of a successor to Fabian, to which the church of Rome proceeded after an interval of fourteen months due to the Decian persecution, was the occasion of a schism. The priest Cornelius received the majority of votes, but a minority of the faithful designated Novatian, another Roman priest, who was especially prominent because of his theological knowledge and his abilities, and who was at the same time also somewhat ambitious.¹⁰ He was supported by a party which was small in number, but very headstrong. In this way a new schism broke out, which resulted in the first place from personal rivalry, but at once developed into a doctrinal conflict. Novatian, as we have seen,¹¹ refused pardon to those who had recently lapsed. Cornelius agreed to grant them pardon,

⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 1109.

⁷ *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 149. According to this, the subdeacons had especially to assist the *notarii* or ecclesiastical notaries in drawing up the authentic acts of the martyrs.

⁸ St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxi, 10.

⁹ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xxxvi, 4; St. Jerome, *Epist.*, lxxiv.

¹⁰ On Novatian, cf. A. d'Alès, *Novatien, Etude sur la théologie romaine au milieu du III^e siècle*, Paris, 1925, and Bk. III, p. 852.

¹¹ Cf. Bk. III, p. 853.

provided they did penance. We have already mentioned the increased spiritual severity which Novatian very soon practised, and the growth of a schism which set out to form a Church of the pure and holy, καθαροί. Cornelius had to fight a bitter battle, in which he was strongly supported by St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, who was himself experiencing similar difficulties, though from a contrary reason, due to the upholders of excessive indulgence.¹² Their mutual support helped the two bishops to surmount their difficulties, although the Novatian schism could not be extinguished, and their good relations remained famous, in spite of a slight cloud. The Church has joined them together in a common feast.¹³

In spite of the opposition he had to encounter, or rather on the occasion of it, Cornelius was able to measure the moral power of the head of the Roman Church. He assembled at Rome in the autumn of 251 a synod comprising no less than some sixty bishops, not to mention priests and deacons, who excommunicated Novatian and his followers.¹⁴ We gather that at that time the Roman community had forty-six priests and about forty other clerics. The Christians of Rome very soon had to face further troubles, for the persecution broke out once more under the Emperor Gallus and lasted a few months.¹⁵ In the course of this Cornelius had to go into exile, and there he died.

The Papacy and the Ecclesiastical Ideas of St. Cyprian

Although short and full of difficulties, the pontificate of Cornelius is an important one in the history of the Roman See, and its troubles serve to bring its prestige into prominence. An especially significant testimony is that of the well-known work written by Cyprian¹⁶ in order to defend ecclesiastical unity threatened by schisms, the *De unitate Ecclesiae*. In this we find a respect for the Roman Church which is not surprising in the friend and ally of Cornelius, but which is of particular interest because it is written by a great bishop whose conception of church order is, in spite of this respect, more episcopalian than Roman, and who would later find himself in open

¹² Cf. Bk. III, pp. 849 *et seq.*

¹³ On 16th September.

¹⁴ St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, xiii; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, xliii.

¹⁵ Cf. Bk. III, p. 798.

¹⁶ On the work of St. Cyprian, cf. A. d'Alès, *La théologie de saint Cyprien*, Paris, 1922, and Bk. III, pp. 842 *et seq.*

opposition to the second successor of Cornelius, Pope Stephen, on the subject of heretical baptism.

The *De unitate Ecclesiæ* certainly did not aim at showing that the unity of the Church is assured by the supremacy of the Roman See. What Cyprian set out to defend was the unity of each of the churches which together form the Church universal, a unity centred in a visible authority, that of the bishop. The problem of the union between the various churches, and of a higher authority which would guarantee it, is not his concern. His exegesis of the *Tu es Petrus* excludes any reasonable doubt on this subject. For him, in declaring that he will build his church on Peter, Christ wished to show, by this numerical unity, the moral unity which ought to reign in it. The *Tu es Petrus*, he says again in one of his letters,¹⁷ is to be understood of the whole episcopate. The other apostles remained equal to Peter, *pari consortio præditi et honoris et potestatis*. In spite of this, in this same treatise *De unitate Ecclesiæ*, we read, not, it is true, in all the manuscripts,¹⁸ a formal passage in favour of the Roman primacy: *Primatus Petro datur*, and further, *Qui cathedram Petri*—these two words certainly signify, and can only signify the See of Rome—*super quam fundata Ecclesia est, deserit, in Ecclesia se esse confidit?* “He who separates himself from the chair of Peter, upon which the Church is founded—can he think he is still in the Church?”

Is there not an antinomy between such words and the rest of the treatise? This has been maintained, and a very simple explanation has been advanced: the passage must have been interpolated by persons devoted to Rome. Hugo Koch, one of the most determined opponents of the historical foundation of the Roman primacy, and a most convinced defender of the thesis of the intransigent episcopalism of St. Cyprian, upon which he seems now to be the recognised authority, has even gone further in his last work, *Cathedra Petri*,¹⁹ and has maintained that the interpolation must have been made in the fifth century, round about the time of the Council of Chalcedon,²⁰ when preoccupations of the same kind added to the

¹⁷ *Epist.*, xxvii.

¹⁸ On the twofold recension of the *De unitate*, cf. Bk. III, pp. 855-857.

¹⁹ Beiheft 11 of the *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Giessen, 1930.

²⁰ Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

sixth canon of Nicæa ²¹ a phrase which did not originally belong to it, *Ecclesia romana semper habuit primatum*.

Although this thesis of interpolation, which is that of Protestant writers unfavourable to the Papacy, such as Koch, ²² Benson ²³ and Loofs, ²⁴ has also been accepted by Catholic writers such as Ehrhard ²⁵ and Tixeront, ²⁶ recent writers are more inclined towards the less simple solution of a revision of text made by St. Cyprian himself, a solution favoured not only by Catholic writers such as Abbot Chapman ²⁷ but also by non-Catholics like Otto Ritschl, ²⁸ both of these writers making it plain that the contested version is written in St. Cyprian's own style. Why, then, the revision? Two explanations have been given which are equally credible: (a) the "Roman redaction" was the first, and Cyprian modified it to the extent of striking out the references to the *primatus* when he was in difficulties with Pope Stephen; ²⁹ (b) Cyprian first wrote the *De unitate* expressly in order to combat the African schism, but he strengthened his original text when he sent his book to Rome to make it apply to the Roman schism. ³⁰

²¹ Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

²² Cyprian und der romische Primat, in *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der alchristlichen Literatur*, Vol. XXXV, Leipzig, 1910. Cf. by the same, *Cathedra Petri*, quoted p. 1132, n. 3 and p. 1127, n. 19.

²³ Cyprian, his Life, his Time, his Work, London, 1897, pp. 180 et seq.

²⁴ *Dogmengeschichte*, Halle a. S., 1906, p. 209.

²⁵ *Die alchristliche Literatur und ihre Erforschung von 1884 bis 1900*, Freiburg in Bresgau, 1900, p. 476.

²⁶ *Histoire des Dogmes*, 11th ed., Paris, 1930, pp. 381 et seq.

²⁷ *Les interpolations dans le traité de saint Cyprien sur l'unité de l'Eglise*, in *Revue Bénédictine*, Vol. XIX, 1902, pp. 246 et seq.; 357 et seq., and Vol. XX, 1903, pp. 26 et seq.

²⁸ *Cyprian von Carthago und die Verfassung der Kirche*, Göttingen, 1885, pp. 92 et seq.

²⁹ This is the solution presented, with numerous texts quoted in its support, by P. D. Van der Eynde, *La double édition du De unitate de saint Cyprien*, in *Revue d'hist. ecclés.*, Vol. XXIX, 1933, pp. 1 et seq. He shows that the Scriptural quotations made by St. Cyprian on ecclesiastical matters are also different in the period of difficulties with Rome—an important point.

³⁰ This is the thesis of J. Lebreton, *La double édition du De unitate de saint Cyprien*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, Vol. XXIV, 1934, pp. 456 et seq. He thinks that in this way we can better understand why Cyprian changed his text, since for doing so he had the positive motive of a clearly determined object, and one which moreover could not form the basis of any objection against him. On the other hand, would not a "retractation" in the course of a warm controversy have been noticed at once, discussed, and condemned by the opposite party? However, new comparisons of the texts, made by O. Perler, *Zur Datierung der*

For the rest, the *De unitate Ecclesiæ* is not the only written work of Cyprian in which his episcopalianism nevertheless bows before the supremacy of the Roman See. In his numerous letters, those addressed to Rome or dealing with Roman matters have a distinguishing note, and especially one of them, *Epistola lix*, in which we find the ever famous phrase already quoted³¹ concerning the Roman Church, which is described as the *Ecclesia principalis* whence arises the unity of the priesthood. Hugo Koch has tried to give an interpretation of this in harmony with his own ideas,³² making *Ecclesia principalis* the equivalent of *Ecclesia principis*, and explaining the expression *ad Petri cathedram atque ad Ecclesiam principalem, unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est* as really tantamount to *ad Ecclesiam principis, a quo principe unitas sacerdotalis exorta est*. That is indeed an exegesis of despair, which could find its justification only in the impossibility of harmonising a profession of Roman faith with the ecclesiastical theory of St. Cyprian. But this supposed incompatibility might well be nothing but an arbitrary notion held by a certain type of mind.

St. Cyprian was unquestionably an episcopalian, preoccupied mainly with the interior unity of each church, which its shepherds should defend from heresy, schism and dissensions, and accordingly emphasised above all the office of the bishop. But in certain circumstances he felt it necessary to say in addition that among these churches there is one which is the first and, as it were, the symbol of the unity of all the others, because in tracing back the series of its bishops, we arrive with certainty not merely at a particular and well-known apostle, but indeed at the one in whose person unity had precisely rested. If this Church has in this way a special position, is there not an obligation, not denied, though of course not formulated by St. Cyprian, on the part of the sum total of churches constituting the universal Church, to be in conformity with her ("convenire"³³ in the words of St. Irenæus) in matters of faith, though such obligation does not imply in Rome a supreme right to command, a right which Cyprian rejects in matters of discipline? Such is, in any case, the conclusion reached by historians like Har-

beiden Fassungen des Vierten Kapitels *De Unitate Ecclesiæ* (Romische Quartalschrift, XLIV, 1936, pp. 1-44), have strengthened the thesis of the priority of the "Roman" redaction.

³¹ Cf. Bk. III, p. 869, n. 81.

³² *Cathedra Petri*, pp. 91 et seq.

³³ Cf. Bk. II, p. 491.

ack,³⁴ Funk³⁵ and Batiffol³⁶ who, declining to follow the thesis of the strictly episcopalian interpretation adopted by Koch, Benson and Loofs, Tixeront and Ehrhard, regard Cyprian as, perhaps, less Roman than Chapman and Ritschl think, yet who agree that Cyprian recognised in the Church of Rome, in default of a primacy of jurisdiction, at least the authority of a real and living centre of unity, that is, essentially, of a unity of faith in relation to the universal Church.³⁷

Rome and Carthage

Such recognition did not prevent divergent attitudes, which were sometimes serious.

In the time of Cornelius himself there were the minor difficulties already mentioned: the incident of Hadrumetum, in which Cornelius may have felt that the Church of Africa entertained some doubt as to his legitimacy,³⁸ and the contrary suspicions which Cornelius's examination of the complaints of the African schismatics against Cyprian may have aroused in the latter.³⁹

The Spanish Conflict

Nothing further happened. Cornelius died shortly afterwards. He had as successor Lucius, whose very short pontificate was partly spent in exile; after his death the Roman Church chose for its head the priest Stephen (254-257).⁴⁰ It was during the pontificate of

³⁴ *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, 4th edn., Leipzig, 1909, pp. 417 *et seq.*

³⁵ *Theologische Revue*, Vol. VIII, 1909, p. 422.

³⁶ *L'Eglise naissante et le catholicisme*, Paris, 1909, 12th edn., 1927, pp. 399 *et seq.*

³⁷ We find some echo of these ideas in a recent study on the ecclesiastical theory of Cyprian by B. Poschmann, *Ecclesia principalis, Ein kritischer Beitrag zur Frage des Primats bei Cyprian*, Breslau, 1933. According to this, the original Church (*Urkirche*) and Peter are very closely associated in Cyprian's thought. Rome continues this original Church, and is indeed in this way the *Ecclesia principalis*. But this does not give it more than a special dignity, which in turn involves a duty of interposing more than other churches in order to safeguard the unity of the Church. The idea of an effective jurisdiction of Rome over the Church, undeniably foreign to Cyprian, would be the fruit of a later development, which would appear legitimate to those who believe that Christ really gave the primacy to Peter. Cf. also Bk. III, pp. 866 *et seq.*

³⁸ Cf. Bk. III, p. 853, n. 29.

³⁹ Cf. Bk. III, p. 857, n. 40.

⁴⁰ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, ii.

Stephen that another matter arose which led to a most serious opposition of ideas between Rome and Carthage. Two Spanish bishops whom we have already mentioned, Basilides of Legio (Leon) and Asturica (Astorga), and Martial of Merita (Merida) had procured certificates of sacrifice during the Decian persecution. Their clergy, who wished to have only bishops worthy of the name, would not have anything more to do with them, and called for their deposition, in conformity with the decisions of the African Council, confirmed by Cornelius and Cyprian. This Council, while pronouncing in favour of general measures of mercy in respect of the *lapsi*, had nevertheless deprived apostate clerics of the exercise of the priesthood. The Spanish episcopate agreed with the clergy, and the two *libellatici* were deposed, and replaced by two new bishops, Sabinus and Felix. The condemned bishops thereupon appealed to Rome—a fact which seems to show that such an appeal was regarded as a normal course. Did Pope Stephen, who seems to have been somewhat autocratic like Victor, think the occasion a fitting one to show that the African Council was not the supreme law of the Church? Or did the condemned bishops really succeed in persuading him that they were in fact not guilty? What is certain is that the Pope exonerated them and pronounced them to be re-established in their sees. The Spaniards did not accept defeat, but in 254 notified the African Council of the matter,⁴¹ and also St. Cyprian, who at that time acted as the spiritual director of a notable part of the Church. The Council confirmed the deposition of the two bishops. This was logical on its part, inasmuch as it held that a sentence pronounced by the Spanish episcopate was certainly valid, but illogical in the sense that it nevertheless considered that it had a right to confirm this sentence.

The Papacy, St. Cyprian and the Gallic Church

It is also possible that Stephen may have received further information which convinced him of the unworthiness of the deposed bishops, for not only do we not find him continuing to lend the weight of his authority to their cause, which indeed seems to have admitted of little in the way of defence, but also, when new circumstances arose shortly afterwards, there is nothing to show any serious change in the relations between him and St. Cyprian arising out

⁴¹ St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxvii.

of the Spanish affair. This was, moreover, succeeded by a French incident, in connection with which, in a way rather unexpected after the Spanish precedent, Cyprian addressed to Rome a request for intervention implying his recognition of Rome's pre-eminent authority. The Bishop of Arles, Marcianus, an upholder of Novatian rigorism, did not accept the decisions taken in concert by Rome and Carthage in 251 and also adopted *de facto* by the churches as a whole in the matter of the reconciliation of the *lapsi*. The Bishop of Lyons, acting in the name of his fellow bishops of the same province, "cæteris episcopis nostris in eadem provincia constitutis,"⁴² denounced Marcianus as a schismatic, both to Rome and to Carthage.⁴³ As a result, St. Cyprian did not hesitate to write himself to Pope Stephen, asking him to have Marcianus deposed by the Gallic bishops and to see that a successor was appointed in his place.⁴⁴ This was tantamount to recognising that it belonged to Stephen to declare the Bishop of Arles unworthy of retaining his episcopal functions, and a phrase at the end of Cyprian's letter, in which he asks Stephen to inform him of the name of the new bishop so that the Africans may know with whom they ought to communicate, certainly seems to show that he alone is a legitimate bishop with whom Rome, the *Ecclesia principalis* of *Epist. lix*, declares himself in communion.

The Baptismal Controversy

In spite of this, we find that perhaps less than a year after these vicissitudes, a new difficulty arose which proved to be more serious than the preceding ones, and which brought about a real conflict between the Pope and not only the Bishop of Carthage together with the African episcopate, but also several of the most prominent churches of Asia. The baptismal controversy has already been dis-

⁴² Cf. Bk. III, p. 777, where this text has been quoted in support of the thesis that, from the middle of the third century, the Bishop of Lyons already had Gallic colleagues other than those of the Narbonne.

⁴³ St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxviii.

⁴⁴ It does not follow from this text that the Pope was himself to make this nomination, for the circumstances merely rendered it necessary for him to see that it took place. Nevertheless, there were already instances at that time of bishops nominated by the Pope, though it certainly seems that this was restricted to choosing the bishops forming what the texts call his "council," i.e. those of the surrounding parts of Italy, i.e. peninsular Italy, or perhaps a less extensive territory, which would more or less correspond to the civil sphere of the prefect of Rome. Cf. Bk. III, p. 860, n. 48.

cussed above⁴⁵ in suitable detail. It brought out the opposition between two customs hitherto in usage in the Church in different regions. The majority of churches, including Rome, did not practise the rebaptism of converted heretics, but conferred upon them only the imposition of hands and chrism. Asia Minor, Syria and Africa—but not Palestine or Egypt, for these were generally in agreement with each other and tended to act in the Roman way during the first Christian centuries—re-baptised heretics. Even so, in Africa itself there were disagreements on the point, and this led to a new and more solemn affirmation in Council of the discipline followed generally in this province, or rather group of provinces.⁴⁶ Cyprian notified Rome of this decision, in a letter which implicitly condemned the other discipline. It is not surprising that his delegates were ill received on this occasion, and Stephen's reply was one of exceptional gravity. Not only did he not accept the lesson which they had tried to give him but, just as his predecessor Victor had decided, three quarters of a century previously, to impose upon the whole Church the Roman way of fixing the date of Easter, so he in turn declared that the Roman usage in the reception of heretics was the only lawful one, and that all churches ought to conform themselves to it, failing which he would break communion with those who would not do so. We know that thereupon there was resistance—passive indeed but very definite—on the part of the two groups of nonconforming provinces, Asia with Syria, grouped behind Bishop Firmilian of Cæsarea, and Africa headed by Cyprian of Carthage.

Stephen's thesis was this: in so important a matter as the discipline of the sacraments, the practice should be the same throughout the Church, and should be that of Rome. Cyprian's thesis on the other hand was this: unity of faith is compatible with a diversity of usages. The Africans did not thereby deny the obligation of being in agreement in matters concerning the faith with the *Ecclesia principalis*, but they did not regard themselves as bound to follow her in a domain in which the various churches could, in their view, have their own ways of acting. Moreover, they did not consider that they were in any way breaking with Rome: if Rome refused them her communion, they for their part did not wish to separate from her, and they would continue to send messages to her, and to re-

⁴⁵ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 860 *et seq.*

⁴⁶ Proconsular Africa, Numidia and Mauretania.

ceive any representatives from her if any should come. It was indeed a paradoxical situation, and we do not know what would have been its consequences if it had been prolonged. But it was providentially terminated by the death of Stephen in August 257.

Sixtus II

The election of a more conciliatory successor, Sixtus II, brought about a lessening of the tension all the sooner in that the initiative of Stephen, as previously that of Victor, had not been unaccompanied by regrets even amongst those who themselves adhered to the Roman usage. "Dionysius of Alexandria, the Irenæus of this new Victor,"⁴⁷ had informed him that the excommunication of the Asiatics and the Africans was, in his opinion, a measure of severity disproportionate to its motive. Sixtus II saw in this language a counsel of moderation. Relations were reopened between him and St. Cyprian,⁴⁸ and also with Firmilian. Very soon afterwards, his successor, Pope Dionysius, was sending, together with words of peace, the assistance of Roman charity to the Church of Cappadocia, devastated by the Persian invasion (259).⁴⁹

§ 3. THE PAPACY IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE THIRD CENTURY

The reign of Sixtus II was a very short one. On 6th August 258 he was arrested in the cemetery of Prætextatus while celebrating the Eucharist contrary to the edicts of Valerian; he was immediately beheaded, after eleven months and six days of his pontificate.¹ The new bishop was not chosen from among the deacons, as had long been the custom in Rome. Doubtless that was because the deacons had all perished. Hence, as in the election of Cornelius, a priest was chosen. This took place at the end of the Decian persecution. The priest's name was Dionysius, and he was duly raised to the episcopate.

⁴⁷ L. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I. p. 429.

⁴⁸ Pontius, *Vita Cypriani*, xiv.

⁴⁹ St. Basil, *Epist.*, lxx.

¹ *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, pp. 7, 68, and 155, and St. Cyprian, *Epist.*, lxxx.

Pope Dionysius

His reign marks a new date in the history of the Roman Church, and provides one more incident testifying to the directive authority which it claimed and which was recognised by the other churches in matters of faith. Here we have a Roman intervention in the life of another Christian community, reminding us, by its manner and success, of that of Pope Clement at Corinth, but motived this time by a reason of a doctrinal character. The intervention is all the more significant in that the church to which Rome thus addresses a warning is the one which appears, in traditions echoed by the sixth canon of the Council of Nicæa ² and by subsequent history, as the first in dignity among those of the East, the Church of Alexandria.

The "Two Dionysii"

The incident itself has been related above. The Bishop of Alexandria, Dionysius, in order to combat the excesses of the Sabellian or Modalist doctrines, according to which the distinction between the Persons of the Trinity is only a verbal one, set forth in a letter an exposition in the contrary sense, i.e. in the Origenist sense of the doctrine of the Word, stressing the distinction between the Persons to the point of seeming to end in Tritheism, and plainly subordinating the Son to the Father. This letter aroused much feeling: those whom it envisaged turned spontaneously to the Bishop of Rome, as to the highest and safest doctrinal authority, complaining of the errors in the letter. Pope Dionysius did not hesitate to take up the matter; he caused it to be examined by his council, that is, by the bishops of his immediate neighbourhood, peninsular Italy or at least the suburbican region, and he ended by sending a letter written in his own name and that of his council, condemning both Modalism and, without naming Dionysius of Alexandria himself, all those who held three separate hypostases, and made the Word a creature. The Egyptian bishop replied by presenting arguments to justify himself, but he did not in any way protest either against the Roman teaching or against the right which the Bishop of Rome claimed to give it.³

² Cf. *supra*, p. 1120, and *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 1027 *et seq.*

On this occasion, the Bishop of Rome spoke truly as a judge of the faith, whose doctrinal sentence is valid for the whole Church, and his decision was accepted, without any discussion as to his competence to give it, by the occupant of the episcopal see which at that period had the greatest prestige in the whole East. The letter of Dionysius gave in addition an opportunity to the church of Rome to condemn at one and the same time the Sabellian errors and the opposite exaggerations, and to dissociate itself still more clearly than it had done under Callistus from interpretations of the schools, condemning their necessarily fragmentary and one-sided character, in order to adhere to the common teaching which, indifferent to the systems of the schools, sacrificed none of the elements of Tradition concerning the divine unity and the Trinity of Persons, and did not make them the subject of speculation.

Pope Felix

Dionysius of Rome died on 26th December 268.⁴ The Christian community of Rome elected as his successor Felix, who governed the Church until 275. Continuing the work of Dionysius, he is said to have written to Maximus, Bishop of Alexandria, a letter on the divinity and perfect humanity of Christ, inserted later on in great part in the Acts of the Council of Ephesus (431).⁵ But it has been proved that this supposed letter was an Apollinarian forgery.⁶ Even so, the importance of the Roman See in the Universal Church was proclaimed during the pontificate of Felix by the imperial authority itself, in significant circumstances: the Bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, on account of his anti-Trinitarian and Adoptionist heresies, destructive of the divinity of Christ, had been deposed by a Council assembled in his episcopal city in 268; he tried to remain at the head of his diocese, and refused to give up the places of worship to the new bishop, Demetrianus. The Emperor Aurelian, who was passing through Antioch at the beginning of 272, was

⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx; *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 261. On this date, which seems certain, instead of 269 as sometimes given, cf. Aube, *Hist. des persécutions*, Vol. IV, p. 460, and Allard, *Hist. des persécutions*, Vol. III, pp. 207 and 210-211.

⁵ See *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

⁶ Cf. Bardenheuer, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, Vol. II, 2nd edn., p. 645. On Apollinarism see *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

called in to settle this question of the right of property, and he declared that the true bishop and legitimate possessor of the episcopal house was the one recognised by the bishops of Rome and Italy.⁷ The fact that Rome was the capital city naturally explains this decision in part, but equally it corresponds to a no less real state of things in the ecclesiastical order: the Emperor was not unaware of what the Roman bishop was in the eyes of the whole Church.

Eutychianus and Gaius

Of the two immediate successors of Felix, Eutychianus and Gaius, we know scarcely more than their names. Their episcopates were times of peace and tranquillity, during which the history of the Church was uneventful. The very dates of their respective reigns are altogether uncertain. The *Liber Pontificalis* assigns to Eutychianus a reign of eight years and eleven months, and to Gaius thirteen years, while according to Eusebius Eutychianus reigned only ten months and Gaius fifteen years.⁸ We can only confess our ignorance as to the chronology of these two pontificates. Similarly, the supposed relationship between Gaius and Diocletian, inferred from a martyrological *Passion*, that of St. Suzanna, must be relegated to the realm of legend, for the *Acta Suzannæ* are devoid of any historical value.⁹

Pope Marcellinus

The successor to Gaius, Marcellinus, nominated in 296 if we accept the chronology of the *Liber Pontificalis*, or as early as 291 if we follow that of Eusebius, was destined to see the return of bloody days, those of the last and great persecution under Diocletian, the repercussions of which brought about a sharp crisis in the Church of Rome, though a purely local one. This we shall deal with later.¹⁰

⁷ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxx. Cf. G. Bardy, *Paul de Samosate, Etude historique* (*Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense*, fasc. 4), Paris and Louvain, 1923, pp. 284 *et seq.* New edition, 1929, pp. 358 *et seq.*

⁸ Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 1, and *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne. Vol. I, pp. cclxi and 159-161.

⁹ Cf. L. Duchesne, *Les légendes de l'Alta Semita et le tombeau de saint Cyriaque sur la voie d'Ostie*, in *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, published by the French School in Rome, Vol. XXXVI, 1916, pp. 27 *et seq.* (the *Passion* of St. Suzanna is studied in pp. 33 *et seq.*).

¹⁰ Cf. *infra*, pp. 1196-1197 and pp. 1203-1204.

§ 4. THE PRE-EMINENT AUTHORITY OF THE ROMAN SEE

Characteristics of Roman Authority

With the pontificate of Marcellinus, we conclude a history of about a century and a half, during which the Roman bishop, successor of St. Peter and ruler of the church of the capital city of the Empire, was, by that very fact, in face of the imperial power which was at times hostile and at others tolerant or even benevolent, the first representative of the Christian Church. Upon him fell the first blows when persecution broke out; but sometimes also, as under Aurelian, he was the subject of attentions the significance of which cannot be doubted. During the same period, a series of facts of various kinds but always significant, bore witness to the special but otherwise undefined authority, which was his in the eyes of the Church as a whole.

Visits to Rome on the part of the most prominent men of the Christian world, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, as well as by heterodox people like Marcion, Theodotus or Sabellius, who could not be indifferent to the views of Rome; numerous letters of the Roman Church to other churches on points of doctrine or of discipline, such as those of Victor, Pontian, Fabian, Cornelius, Stephen, Sixtus, Dionysius, and Felix—all these things bear witness to the prestige of Rome, as also to the solicitude of Rome for the Universal Church. It must be carefully noted that this prestige was independent of the individual merits of those whose office, not whose person, benefited thereby: was not Callistus preferred to Hippolytus, and Cornelius to Novatian? The authority of the Bishop of Rome was not derived from his personal merits, as was the case for a Cyprian, and would be later on for an Ambrose or an Augustine, but from the tradition he represented. Add to all this some other no less significant facts already mentioned elsewhere: ¹ the influence of Rome in the definition of the rule of faith enshrined in the baptismal Creed, and in the formation of the Canon of the Scriptures; the continuity of an episcopal succession going back without a break to the apostles, and indeed to the apostles Peter and Paul, thus making the Roman

¹ Cf. Vol. III, pp. 698 *et seq.*

Church the Apostolic Church *par excellence*; ² and we have a right to say in conclusion that the distinctive features of the Catholic constitution of the Church were set forth in Rome with a continuity, a definiteness and an absence of hesitation in which we discern at once the manifestation and an explanation of its universal authority.

The Roman See and Local Churches

We must repeat that this authority was, in these early days, one which was experienced rather than conceived, or, as Mgr. Duchesne has said, "felt rather than defined: felt in the first place by the Romans themselves, who, from the time of St. Clement, never doubted as to their duties towards Christianity as a whole; felt also by the others, in so far as this impression was not counteracted by some particular pre-occupation."³ Doubtless, when some local tradition, liturgical or ritual in character, such as that of the Asiatics in the matter of the date of Easter in the time of Pope Victor, or that of a number of Easterns and Africans on the subject of the baptism of heretics in the time of Pope Stephen, was found to be in opposition with the discipline which Rome wanted to make general, the prerogatives of the See of Peter were the subject of questioning as regards their application. "But in the ordinary course of things, the great Christian community of the metropolis of the world, founded at the very beginning of the Church, and consecrated by the sojourn and the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul, retained its old position as the common centre of Christendom and, if we may so express it, the headquarters of the Gospel. The pious curiosity of the faithful and of the pastors was constantly directed towards her. Everywhere people wanted to know what was being done there, and what was taught there; if necessary, visits were paid there. The originators of religious movements sought to be accepted there, and even to clothe themselves with its universal authority by finding a place among its leaders. Its charity, derived from an already considerable fortune, reached the most distant provinces like

² Note especially the tremendous importance which Irenæus (cf. *Adversus hæreses*, I, xxvii; III, iii) attributes to the Roman episcopal list as a guarantee of the Apostolic succession. Shortly after his time, the unknown author of a treatise (*Against the heresy of Artemon*), written in the time of Pope Zephyrinus, says in a passage conserved by Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, V, xxii, 3), that "the truth of preaching has been kept down to the time of Victor, the thirteenth Bishop of Rome after Peter."

³ *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, pp. 536-537.

Cappadocia and Arabia in times of persecution or of disasters. Its eyes were upon the doctrinal controversies which disturbed other countries.”⁴ Adopting as though by instinct both moderation and wisdom in its practice, following with sure steps the *via media* which kept it away from the rocks which threatened the various theologies of the schools, acting as the guardian of a purely religious deposit which it did not consider itself called upon to transcribe into the language of a particular philosophy, but holding itself ready when it was necessary, to show the danger or error in any particular interpretation, “it did not hesitate to ask from Origen an explanation of the eccentricities of his exegesis, and to recall the great primate of Egypt to orthodoxy. Its position was so evident that even pagans were fully aware of it. Confronted with two claimants to the see of Antioch, the emperor Aurelian saw at once who was the rightful bishop, namely, the one in communion with the Bishop of Rome.”⁵

⁴ Duchesne, *ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 537.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 537-538.

ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY, AND THE JURIDICAL SITUATION OF THE CHURCH IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE DURING THE THIRD CENTURY¹

THE quarrel which was settled by the decision of Aurelian, and this decision itself, are important not only as regards the position held in the universal Church by the Roman bishop. They are also of the greatest interest from two other points of view. They testify both to the existence of corporative ecclesiastical property, and of relations which were, so to speak, official, well before the end of the era of persecutions, between the Church and the Roman Empire.

§ I. ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY

The Manner of Possession of Church Goods during the Second Century

The material goods necessary for the existence of a religious community, ecclesiastical lands, churches and cemeteries, were in the early days of the history of the Church held in the names of individual owners.² But this state of things was not altogether satisfactory. "A change of mind on the part of the owner or his heirs, his apostasy, or transfer to a heretical sect, would endanger the use by the Church. In the case of a burial place, the use itself could not be altered, but, for instance, an owner not well disposed towards the Church could introduce into a Christian burying ground dead heretics or pagans belonging to his family."³ Another kind of possession was therefore desirable."⁴

¹ Bibliography.—The essential works to be consulted are indicated in the notes to this chapter. Add to these: J. P. Waltzing, *Collegia*, article in *Dict. d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, Vol. III, 2nd Part, cols. 2107 et seq.

² Cf. Bk. II, pp. 520 et seq.

³ It was impossible to exclude such by a disposition such as that envisaged by the formula "ad religionem pertinentes meam" employed by a deceased person to designate those members of his family to be put in his tomb. Christianity, being a *religio illicita*, could not invoke the protection of the laws. Cf. De Rossi, in *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, Vol. III, 1865, pp. 54, 92.

⁴ Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 382.

Constitution of Ecclesiastical Property

This was introduced, at least at Rome, even before the end of the second century. The pontificate of Pope Victor (189-199), which is important from so many points of view,⁵ may well have witnessed this important transformation in the social life of the Church, which was all the more understandable at this period because, following the precarious but real peace granted to Christians by the Emperor Commodus in the pontificate of Eleutherius (175-189), Victor's predecessor, the Church was able to profit by a certain benevolence or tolerance on the part of the civil authority. In any case, when Victor's successor, Pope Zephyrinus (199-217), appointed his deacon Callistus, destined to become Pope in his turn, to the administration of "the cemetery,"⁶ there is hardly room for doubt that this had to do with a corporative possession of the Roman church, acquired some time previously. The same certainly applies to the *area sepulturarum* in Carthage, which, at a not very much later time, was, according to Tertullian,⁷ known to belong to the Christians.

Its Development in the Third Century

Evidences multiply from that time onwards. Thus, under Alexander Severus, we have the dispute between the tavern-keepers, *popinarii*, and the body of Christians in Rome, over the possession of a piece of land which had previously formed part of public ground, a dispute which was settled by the decision of the Emperor in favour of the Church.⁸ After the Valerian persecution (260),⁹ we find Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria and several of his colleagues summoned by the imperial fiscal officers to receive back religious places which had been sequestered. In 272, the possession of the episcopal dwelling of Antioch was disputed by Catholics and heretics who were followers of Paul of Samosata, and Aurelian decided in favour of the former. At the beginning of the fourth century, when the last persecution was coming to an end, the edicts of the emperor Galerius, and of Maxentius for Italy and Africa, restored in turn to Christians of various parts of the Empire the

⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 1122-1123.

⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 1125.

⁷ *Ad Scapulam*, iii.

⁸ Cf. Bk. III, p. 759.

⁹ Cf. Bk. III, p. 806.

corporative possessions confiscated in the Diocletian persecution.¹⁰ Finally, the measures taken subsequently at Milan by Constantine and Licinius equally and formally concerned ecclesiastical property,¹¹ which could even be claimed back by the churches from third parties holding it.

§ 2. THE ORIGINS OF ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY, AND THE CONDITIONS OF EXISTENCE OF THE CHURCH IN THE EMPIRE

De Rossi's Theory on the "Collegia Tenuiorum"

Seeing that Christianity was officially proscribed, how was it possible that corporative property on the part of the Church could not only originate but also be recognised by the State?

Giovanni Battista de Rossi thought the explanation of this could be found¹ in a peculiarity in the legislation concerning associations. Though the Empire regarded these with little favour, there had nevertheless been an exception, at least since Septimius Severus, in favour of the burial colleges of humble people, *collegia tenuiorum*, the members of which joined together to procure a suitable burial place. For this end the association could receive contributions, possess land, and hold meetings of a religious character. Christians have always cared greatly for the burial place in which are to be laid bodies destined for a glorious resurrection, and in their religious life cemeteries have occupied a prominent place: may we not conclude that they profited by the benevolent legislation concerning burial colleges, presenting their associations in this guise, which had so much to justify it? De Rossi thought they must have done so, and this opinion, which provided a solution for a difficult problem, received such support that it seemed to be the only one possible.

Critique of De Rossi's Theory

Although it is still advanced by more than one writer to-day, it is not now regarded with so much favour, and such strong criticisms

¹⁰ Cf. *infra*, pp. 1207 et seq.

¹¹ " . . . ad jus corporis eorum, idest ecclesiarum, non hominum singularium pertinentia" (Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, xlviii). Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*, Vol. I.

¹ Roma sotterranea, Vol. I, p. 101; Vol. II, p. viii; *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, Vol. II, 1864, p. 57; Vol. III, 1865, p. 90.

have been made of it, particularly by Mgr. Duchesne,² that, in spite of the authority of De Rossi, it would be singularly difficult to keep to it to-day. For how can we allow that Christians were prepared to pass as members of burial colleges, seeing that these pagan institutions were regarded by them with horror, as Tertullian bears witness? ³ That writer certainly introduces into his *Apologeticum* a comparison between the two kinds of association, but this was in order strongly to emphasise the contrast between them. Moreover, in order that Christian associations could shelter behind the law officially protecting burial colleges, they would in the first place have had to comply with this law, which implied on the part of the colleges an obligation not to conceal an illicit association. But that was precisely what Christian associations were in the eyes of the authorities, for, since the *Institutum Neronianum*,⁴ the existence of Christianity was legally prohibited. "It would thus have been necessary that the police should have been ignorant of the fact that a Christian church was referred to. That would have been particularly difficult. The burial colleges were associations of only a few people, two or three dozen perhaps. A church in a big city such as Rome, Carthage, or Alexandria, might easily comprise from thirty to forty thousand faithful in the middle of the third century. It would have been difficult to present such a great multitude of people as burial colleges." ⁵

The suggestion must therefore be abandoned. The explanation of the position of Christian communities from the end of the second century, enjoying lengthy periods of peace between violent attacks, and managing to possess lands, places of worship and cemeteries as corporative properties, is to be found in the fact that during these periods they profited by a *de facto* toleration, or we might even say, at times, by a tacit recognition. In fine, the Church, as we have already shown,⁶ did not conceal itself systematically except in periods of bitter hostility, when it had to go below ground to celebrate its religious mysteries, and when many Christians individually, and sometimes even the heads of communities, withdrew themselves by flight and took refuge in suitable hiding places from the searches by the police.

² *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, pp. 384-387.

³ *Apologeticum*, xxxix.

⁴ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 374 *et seq.*

⁵ Duchesne, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

⁶ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 504-505, 519.

The Church in the Eyes of the Roman Empire

The state of the churches from the truce of Commodus to the Peace of Constantine, or rather until the edict of Galerius, was substantially, as a very acute jurist has recently established,⁷ that of *de facto* associations of which the authorities were not unaware, which they were coming to understand more and more, and which, though they disapproved, they tended more and more to tolerate,⁸ while at the same time they were ready, at the end of peaceful periods of ever increasing length, to return to attempts at repression and suppression by means of severities which were the more extreme and prolonged, in that the progress made by Christianity during the periods of tranquillity which had preceded caused greater anxiety on the part of the civil authorities. These attempts at repression, however, resulted only in a series of temporary checks. As Renan wrote: ⁹ "The Roman Empire had linked up its destiny with the law concerning *coetus illiciti*, the *illicita collegia*. Christians and barbarians, accomplishing the task of the human conscience, destroyed the law; the Empire which had attached itself to it collapsed with it."

Hence the relations between Christianity and the civil authority had on both sides an open character very different from that involved in the conception of the Church concealed beneath appearances which would have made it a secret society. "Tertullian," says Mgr. Duchesne again,¹⁰ "announces very plainly that the Christian society is a religious association: *Corpus sumus de conscientia religionis*." ¹¹ Indeed, it was not necessary for him to say that: everybody knew it. To the pagans of his day, the notion of "Christian" was inseparable from that of a member of a religious society. The

⁷ R. Saleilles, *L'organisation juridique des premières communautés chrétiennes*, in *Mélanges P. F. Girard*, Paris, 1912, Vol. II, pp. 469 et seq.

⁸ M. Besnier, in a recent study on this subject (*Eglises chrétiennes et collèges funéraires*, in *Mélanges Dufourcq*, Paris, 1932, pp. 9 et seq.) rightly points out that the *Gnomon of the Idiologus*, that is the judicial ruling applied by the imperial procurator of Egypt, furnishes a proof that often only nominal penalties were inflicted on members of unauthorised associations. Cf. on the *Gnomon of the Idiologus*, Schupart, in *Berliner Griechischen Urkunden*, Vol. VI, 1, Berlin, 1910, and J. Carcopino, *Le Gnomon de l'Idiologue et son importance historique*, in *Revue des Etudes anciennes*, Vol. XXIX, 1922, pp. 211 et seq. M. Besnier likewise comes to the conclusion that De Rossi's theory must be abandoned.

⁹ *Les Apôtres*, p. 364.

¹⁰ *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, pp. 386-387.

¹¹ *Apologeticum*, xxxix, 1.

assemblies for worship, the religious bonds which united all the faithful, were the first things to be perceived and calumniated. Hence, to tolerate Christians meant to tolerate the body of Christians; to persecute Christians meant to persecute the collective body they necessarily formed. This collective entity, which never ceased to grow and to become stronger, might appear dangerous to the security of the Empire: then the authorities would seek to exterminate it. But it might also appear inoffensive. Commodus, the Syrian emperors, Gallienus, and even Valerian, Aurelian and Diocletian, at the beginning of their reigns, did not regard Christianity as a danger. Lastly, one might recoil before the extermination of so many people, and before the dissolution of a society which so many severe measures had failed to check. A few emperors went further still. When Gallienus wrote to the bishops in order to give them back their churches, when Aurelian made Paul of Samosata surrender the church of Antioch, the Christians were doubtless very much tempted to regard themselves as authorised, both as individuals and as a corporation.

"Thus, the emperors of the third century all adopted a very definite attitude towards the Church: they either persecuted it openly, or else they tolerated it. In no case did they ignore it. Its meeting places, its cemeteries, and the names and domiciles of its leaders were known to the civil magistrates and the administrative authorities. If an edict of persecution should be issued, they knew where to find the bishop, they had him arrested, and took possession of the places of worship and of the goods of the Church. When the edict was revoked, it was once more the bishop who was sought out in order to receive the restored possessions. Of legal fictions, burial colleges, and mysterious titles, the documents give no testimony or even hint. All negotiations were between the government and the Christian body. Christianity had not ceased to be prohibited in theory; no imperial rescript had recognised it as a *religio licita*, or declared that Christian communities were authorised associations. The legal barriers were always in existence. But it became more and more impossible to take them seriously. The Vine of the Lord extended beyond them on all sides by its prolific growth."¹²

¹² Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 387.

CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE THIRD CENTURY¹

THE varying situation of the Church from Septimius Severus to Diocletian explains the divergent if not opposed characters of Christian life in the Roman Empire from the end of the second to the beginning of the fourth century.

I. CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD

§ I. CHRISTIANS AND CIVIC LIFE

Christians and the Common Life

At that time, as previously, a Christian was a man called upon by the requirements of a higher morality to lead a life which would distinguish him from his fellow citizens without making it necessary for him to withdraw from the city. The law might strike him at any time, as the sovereign power had enacted; yet he was not thereby in the situation of a criminal whose life depended only on the ignorance of the authorities or his fellow citizens as to his real personality. Doubtless a certain mystery surrounded Christians because their religious activity was reserved to the intimacy of their relations with God, but this atmosphere of mystery gradually diminished with the

¹ Bibliography.—As for ch. xiii in Bk. II, adding the works mentioned in the notes to the present chapter.

Consult also: On the question of military service: A. Harnack, *Militia Christi, Die Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Tübingen, 1905; E. Vacandard, *La question du service militaire chez les chrétiens des premiers siècles*, ch. iii in *Etudes de critique et d'histoire religieuse*, 2nd series, Paris, 1910, pp. 127-168. On Christian morals: O. Dittrich, *Geschichte der Ethik. Die Systeme der Moral vom Altertum bis zur Gegenwart*, 3 vols., Leipzig, 1926. On the Catacombs and primitive Christian art: Dom H. Leclercq, art. *Catacombes*, in *Dict. d'Archéologie chrét. et de Liturgie*, Vol. II, 2nd part, Paris, 1910, cols. 2376 et seq.; F. Fornari, *San Sebastiano*, Rome, 1933; E. Josi, *Il cimitero di Callisto*, Rome, 1933; J. P. Kirsch, *Die christliche Epigraphik und ihre Bedeutung für die Kirchengeschichtliche Forschung*, Fribourg in Switzerland, 1898, and *Sull' origine dei motivi iconografici nella pittura cimiteriale di Roma*, in *Rivista di Archeologia cristiana*, Vol. IV, 1927, pp. 259 et seq.; E. Le Blant, *Etude sur les sarcophages chrétiens de la ville d'Arles*, Paris, 1878.

lapse of time, and the disciples of Jesus were better known in the third century than in the second.

Participation in Civic Life

Though the prescriptions of Christian morality continued to restrict their share in civic life, or rather to differentiate it in many ways from that of other citizens of the Empire, their participation was none the less real. And though it was not general, and certainly not practised in the same degree everywhere, we have evidence of it in the shape of precise testimonies from one extreme of the Empire to the other.

The Canons of the Council of Elvira concerning Municipal Magistrates

Spain on the one hand and Asia on the other provide us with examples of Christians in the third century exercising municipal functions. True, the document which is the source of our information concerning Spain does not represent the authorities as adopting a very encouraging attitude in this matter; but even so, we must try to get a proper idea of its significance. We refer to the Canons of the Council of Elvira (Illiberis) held about the year 300.² One of these canons, the 56th, stipulates that the duumvirs, or magistrates presiding over the government of cities, should abstain from attending church during their year of office. We gather from this that there were Christian duumvirs, but the carrying out of their functions made it very difficult for them to avoid all contact with pagan worship. Hence the decree issued by the Council—a decree which in fact is undeniably moderate in character, and which shows that the Spanish bishops did not wish absolutely to forbid the faithful to accept the office of magistrates, and thus relinquish them entirely to the pagans. We are not surprised that other canons, 2 to 4 and 55, are much more severe in regard to Christians who had accepted the office of flamen, which constituted a provincial or municipal priesthood, doubtless already half secularised and honorary rather than really religious, but even so implying the officiating at ceremonies which could not be approved by the Church. The Council plainly condemns Christian flamens, except such as contented

² Cf. *supra*, p. 1118.

themselves with wearing the crown which was its insignia and did not take part in any sacrifice: these might be admitted to Communion after two years of penance.³ We gather from this that at the end of the third century Christians were so far from being indifferent towards public life that many of them went too far in the contrary direction and did not hesitate to undertake duties which, as their spiritual leaders felt compelled to remind them with the threat of grave penalties, were more or less incompatible with their beliefs and the obligations which followed from these.

In this matter we must bear in mind that, judging from certain other decisions of this same Council of Elvira, the Spanish Church was probably particularly severe in its attitude. The canons of the Council give an impression of rigorism, one might almost say of Puritanism, which would suggest that from the early ages Christian Spain displayed a strong current in the direction of asceticism and the reprobation of anything that seemed to compromise with the spirit of the world. We have already seen⁴ that the Council of Elvira had made continence a strict obligation for the ministers of the altar; it also severed idolators from the communion of the Church for ever (canons 1 and 3); it not only condemned loans for interest (canon 20), which were disapproved of by all the Fathers, but it added the penalty of excommunication, and it forbade images in the churches (canon 36).

The Christians of Asia and Municipal Life

The tendencies were not at all the same in Asia, a land where life was easy, and where we may well believe that severe measures would not have met with much success, although the penitential discipline there was very strict, perhaps by way of reaction,⁵ and

³ On this question of the Christian flamens, cf. L. Duchesne, *Le concile d'Elvire et les Flamines Chrétiens*, in *Mélanges Renier*, Paris, 1887, pp. 171 et seq. From the fourth century, the flamenate was wholly secularised, in spite of the internal contradiction which this involved, and it became a dignity which it was altogether normal for a Christian to accept. Cf. the end of the article *Flamen*, by Camille Jullian, in *Dictionnaire des Antiquités grecques et romaines* of Daremberg and Saglio; Pallu de Lessert, *Fastes des provinces africaines*, Vol. II, Paris, 1901, p. 352; J. Carcopino, *La table de patronat de Timgad*, in *Revue africaine*, Vol. LVII, 1913, pp. 163 et seq.

⁴ Cf. *supra*, p. 1107.

⁵ Compare for instance certain canons of the Council of Elvira such as canon 5 with the Council of Ancyra (canons 22-23) prescribing many years of penance after a murder even though unpremeditated.

Christians knew how to die there as elsewhere when necessary.

Moreover, it was in the East that Christianity had made the most rapid conquests, and we need not be surprised to find that, in provinces in which at the end of the third century the Christians formed already the majority or an important minority of the population, they were more closely enmeshed in their surroundings, and less and less removed from the general life of cities. Several Asiatic inscriptions show us Christian members of their municipal curia, busy about the affairs of their city, its prosperity, and its honour.⁶ In more than one martyr's *Passion*, we find simple believers or members of the clergy enjoying particular consideration on the part of their fellow citizens. These latter were, it is true, capable of becoming suddenly pitiless adversaries in the time of persecution, but sometimes they retained even then their esteem and sympathy for Christians, and did not spare their efforts to save them from tortures.⁷

Christians in the Imperial Court and in the Chief Magistracies

Need we recall once more the details given by Eusebius concerning the great personages in the Court and the high magistrates in the Empire who professed Christianity, and were in the time of Diocletian dispensed by the imperial good will from assisting at pagan ceremonies?⁸ There were often indeed, from Septimius Severus to Diocletian, Christians in the imperial palace, and the names found in inscriptions in various places reveal conversions to Christianity among families in which participation in public life had not ceased to be a tradition.

§ 2. THE QUESTION OF MILITARY SERVICE

Christians in the Army

More truly citizens of the earthly fatherland than has sometimes been thought, Christians similarly did not hesitate to become its

⁶ Cf. W. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1883, pp. 424 *et seq.*; 1887, pp. 16 *et seq.*; 1898, pp. 722 *et seq.*; F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, *Monumenta Ecclesiæ liturgica*, Paris, 1902, Vol. I, nos. 2787, 2790; F. Cumont, *Les inscriptions de l'Asie Mineure*, nos. 137, 145, 146, 162, 168, 177, 178, in *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* published by the French School in Rome, Vol. XV, 1895, pp. 245 *et seq.*

⁷ Cf. Bk. III, p. 796 and p. 799, n. 37.

⁸ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 809 *et seq.*

soldiers, charged with its defence, and perhaps even with its extension. Accordingly we find numbers of them in the Roman armies at a time when military service was obligatory only for the sons of veterans or in the cases, increasingly infrequent, of extraordinary levies. The "purge" to which Galerius had recourse on the threshold of the fourth century¹ is the best proof that, from the end of the second to that of the third century, despite a current of hostility to the profession of arms fortified by the intransigence of Tertullian, a "conscientious objection" was not felt by the majority.

The "Conscientious Objection" of the Intellectuals

It existed nevertheless, and even spread. Tertullian was responsible for this in the first place, by reason of the evolution which led him on to an ever greater intransigence. But certain admonitions on the part of Celsus,² exhorting Christians not to be backward in the service of the emperor, even in the army, would seem to indicate that there was in some circles a certain lukewarmness in this matter. But so far we know of no anti-militarist Christian declaration. In the *Apologeticum*, which appeared in 197, Tertullian boasted that Christianity had believers everywhere, including the army. Fourteen years later, when he had become a Montanist, he praised, in his *De corona militis*, the Christian soldier who on the occasion of the distribution of a *donativum* had refused to wear the laurel wreath which was required in the circumstances, and preferred the condemnation which was bound to ensue to an action which he regarded as opposed to his faith. Even so, it follows from this narrative that his Christian comrades did not imitate him.

Tertullian tried to erect an exceptional case of reckless heroism into a general rule. His words, though coming from an already heretical mouth, were not without effect, especially as he returned to the matter with even greater force a few months later in a new treatise, *De idololatria*. In this he laid down the principle that military service is absolutely incompatible with the profession of Christianity, in view of the obligation incumbent even upon simple soldiers to be present at sacrifices and to use the sword, for this, he maintained, is condemned by the Gospel. This was tantamount to forbidding Christians absolutely to enter the army. We can under-

¹ Cf. *infra*, pp. 1186 et seq.

² According to Origen, *Contra Celsum*, VIII, lxxii.

stand that these reasonings made an impression on numerous minds. Starting with Tertullian, then, the question of military service was one which presented itself to Christians, and it was generally answered in his sense.

Given certain premisses, reasoning itself was in favour of this thesis. Accordingly we find it adopted in the ranks of Christians, especially by the intellectuals, though with modifications. But such reasoning could easily lead to illogical results. Origen, addressing the pagans in his *Contra Celsum*, says that, while soldiers were fighting, Christians served the Empire by their prayers and virtues, but they had to keep their hands pure from blood, "like the priests of your idols and the attendants of your gods."³ Lactantius, at the commencement of the following century, repeats once more that the obligation of a soldier to shed blood makes it impossible for Christians to take up the profession of arms.⁴ This teaching had its results, as we see in the time of Diocletian on the eve of the renewal of persecution when there were some cases of refusals of military service.⁵

Opposition between Theories and Practice

But it is indeed striking that these were never more than isolated cases and, in exhorting these pacifists to return to a better frame of mind, the leaders put before them the examples of their Christian comrades, as happened in the case of the hero in the *De corona*.⁶ True, from the *Passions* of military martyrs which have come down to us—and their number is not to be despised⁷—we do not gather that Christians were ever in the Army in large numbers, but it is also true that they do not figure there as exceptions. The reasoning of Tertullian or even of Origen, which the ecclesiastical magisterium did not adopt as its own, cannot therefore have had a far reaching effect. The position of Origen, great man as he was, could not be regarded as tenable, for he recognised that the Empire had to have its defenders, adding that Christians could only pray for them.

³ *Contra Celsum*, VIII, lxxiii.

⁴ *De institutione divina*, v, 18.

⁵ Cf. e.g. the *Acta S. Maximiliani*.

⁶ Cf. *ibid.*

⁷ Cf. H. Delehay, *Les légendes grecques des saints militaires*, Paris, 1909, p. 1. The writer even describes this number as "relatively considerable." That perhaps gives a somewhat exaggerated idea of the proportion. But it must be admitted that the *Passions* do not tell us everything.

The comparison he introduced with the pagan priesthood was ingenious, but illusory. Though applicable to the Christian clergy, a moment's reflection showed that it was unacceptable for the Christian people as a whole, unless it were accepted that these would always be in a minority in the Empire, and this could not have been Origen's idea. If the day should come when there were not more citizens than Christians, could the latter refuse to be responsible for the former? The ideal of perfection such as that of the monastic life has never been set forth other than as the privilege of a select few; if this ideal should become that of the whole human race, the days of the race would be numbered. Similarly, there was an obvious antinomy between the ideas of Tertullian and Origen on military service, that is, the service of the earthly fatherland which the Church herself said it was their duty to serve, and the programme of winning all men to the faith of Christ, which has ever been that of the Church in all ages. That is why the reasonings of jurists such as Tertullian or of philosophers like Lactantius have never become the teaching of the Church. A document which we may attribute to the third century, and which has perhaps some connection with Rome, known under the name of the *Canons of Hippolytus*, may reflect a state of mind similar to that of Tertullian and Origen. But the title of this work is certainly not sufficient to lead us to regard it as an official document emanating from the Church of Rome. The good sense of the people resisted these theories or ignored them, and Christians continued, in greater or less numbers, to serve in the army. And other illustrious Christian thinkers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen's own master, explicitly defended the compatibility of the profession of the Christian religion with the military profession like all others, as for instance those of sailors and farmers: "Are you a peasant? cultivate the earth, but in cultivating it, confess God. Do you prefer to sail the seas? Sail on, but pray to the heavenly pilot. Were you a soldier when the Christian faith won you? Listen to the leader whose watchword is justice."⁸

⁸ *Protrepticus*, x, 100. It will perhaps be objected that, when speaking to the soldier, Clement does not tell him explicitly to continue, as he does the two others, and indeed that the imperfect tense instead of the present might indicate a different idea. But the close connection with the two others would seem to exclude any hesitation, and this triple admonition is, in truth, only a paraphrase of the words of St. Paul: "Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called" (*I Cor.*, vii, 20). We might also mention the passage in *Luke*, iii, 14,

The narratives of the persecutions under Decius and Valerian show Christian soldiers called upon to decide for or against their faith: hence there were still such. Some rose to the position of officer, like the *optio* Marinus, whose story is told by Eusebius.⁹ Denounced as a Christian by a comrade who hoped to occupy his place, he was put to death at Cæsarea in Palestine about 260. For the rest, Christian officers and soldiers had become so numerous during the period of peace which had begun with Gallienus and ended only towards the close of the reign of Diocletian, that the renewal of the persecution began on the initiative of Galerius, Diocletian's Cæsar, with a purging of the army. Indeed, it seems that some rejoined when their time had finished, for some of the condemnations in connection with this military persecution under Galerius were of Christians described as veterans.¹⁰

It would therefore be a great exaggeration to say that the ordinary practice of Christians was to refuse military service. Such refusal was, for a century, a theory of moralists, not the teaching of the ecclesiastical magisterium, and not the ordinary reaction of the faithful to the question when it arose. Moreover, as the consequences involved in this intransigent conception did not affect ordinary life for, apart from the exceptions mentioned, people did not become soldiers unless they wished to do so, this theory would seem not to have radically separated the Christians from other citizens of the Empire, even if it had become more widespread. It would only have constituted a peculiar feature, leading certainly to an unfavourable opinion in their regard, but not one which made them rebels in the ordinary course of things. It would not constitute a special and, if we may use the term, secessionist characteristic of the Christian attitude towards the Roman Empire.

§ 3. PUBLIC WORSHIP

Churches in the Third Century

Christians, then, did not withdraw from the life of the city. Hence there was no reason for them to conceal themselves when

on the preaching of St. John the Baptist: "The soldiers also asked him: 'What shall we do?' And he said to them: 'Do violence to no man; neither calumniate any man, and be content with your pay.'" We see that there is no criticism here of the profession itself.

⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xv. Cf. Bk. III, p. 807.

¹⁰ Cf. *infra*, p. 1187.

the civic power did not begin hostilities against them. And accordingly we find that, during the ever lengthening periods of peace in the third century, their worship, hitherto divided between the secrecy or half-secrecy of private houses and occasionally that of the catacombs, began to be celebrated in buildings belonging to their communities, and which were open and public, in other words, in churches like our own. The existence of such churches in the third century is beyond question: the texts and archæological discoveries exclude the slightest doubt in this matter.

Churches in Rome and Italy

Does not the *Chronicle* of Edessa in the year 201 already speak of the church of the city,¹ the "temple of the Christian church," as it calls it, and say that this was destroyed by a flood? Here, then, we have a Christian edifice going back at least to the end of the second century. Several others are known by their remains which were still to be seen in the following century. Recent excavations have brought to light in Rome some portions of the church with the title of Clement—doubtless the name of the founder—which was prior to the fourth century basilica, itself replaced in the eleventh century by the present Basilica of St. Clement.² This edifice consisted of a collection of buildings with a large central space, forming the church itself used for liturgical assemblies, while around it were dwellings for the clergy and various offices on several floors. Also there have been found beneath the Roman church of St. Martin in the Hills some traces of the large earlier chapel called *Titulus Equitii* or *Silvestri*. Here there was a large rectangular hall, divided into two parts by a line of pillars and pilasters, and occupying the whole length of the ground floor of the house planned to hold the clergy and the various services connected with the church. It seems to go back to the period of the Severi.³ At Rome again, archeological research in the churches of St. Anastasia and SS. John and Paul

¹ Cf. Bk. III, p. 768.

² Cf. E. Junyent, *Il titolo di San Clemente in Roma*, in *Studi di antichità cristiana pubblicati per cura del Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia cristiana*, Vol. VI, Rome, 1932.

³ Cf. R. Vielliard, *Les origines du titre de Saint Martin-aux-Monts*, *ibid.*, Vol. IV, Rome, 1931.

has indicated the existence of large halls for worship going back to the third century.⁴ The same seems to have been the case of St. Sabina.⁵ On the other hand, we can only register a mark of interrogation on the subject of St. Pudentiana.⁶ At Aquileia, there are remains of a Christian building, also attributable to the third century, beneath the present basilica.⁷

Churches in the East

A few years ago, researches undertaken in Palestine at one of the sites capable of being identified with the Emmaus of the Gospel, namely Amwas, resulted in the discovery of an important basilica which, it is thought, may date back to the reign of Elagabalus.⁸ Finally, some unusually fortunate discoveries at Dura-Europos, on the Euphrates frontier of the Empire, have revealed to us a chapel belonging at the latest to the last years preceding the capture of the city by the Persians (256). It was decorated throughout with paintings recalling those of the Roman catacombs though possessing a marked originality.⁹ In addition to the chapel thus decorated, there was also at Dura a baptistry, itself decorated with frescoes, and vari-

⁴ E. Junyent, *La maison romaine du titre de Sainte-Anastasie*, in *Rivista di Archeologia cristiana*, Vol. VII, 1930, pp. 91 et seq., where also there is some information concerning SS. John and Paul.

⁵ Cf. H. Marrou, *Sur les origines du titre romain de Sainte-Sabine*, in *Archivum Prædicatorum*, Vol. II, 1932, pp. 316 et seq.

⁶ The very interesting excavations recently made at St. Pudentiana, an account of which is given by A. Petrucci (La basilica di Santa Pudenziana in Roma secondo gli scavi recentemente eseguiti, Rome, 1934), does not as yet provide any basis for the affirmation of the existence of the *titulus Pudentis* before the Peace of the Church. In this title legend has found the name of the senator Cornelius Pudens who is said to have welcomed Peter to Rome. The excavations have only established a connection, still indefinite, between the house which preceded the Christian sanctuary and a certain Q. Servilius Pudens, who was perhaps the consul of this name in 166.

⁷ Cf. *La basilica di Aquileia, a cura del comitato per le cerimonie celebrative del IXe Centenario della basilica*, Bologna, 1933, and G. Brusin, *Gli Scavi di Aquileia, Un quadriennio di attività dell' Associazione nazionale per Aquileia*, 1929-1932, Udine, 1934.

⁸ H. Vincent and M. Abel, *Emmaus, sa basilique et son histoire*, Paris, 1932. "The basilica seems to have been one of the buildings which the ancient Emmaus, raised to the rank of a Roman city under the name of Neapolis, owed to Julius Africanus, who originally lived there" (P. Peeters, *Bulletin des publications hagiographiques*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. LI, 1933, p. 381).

⁹ Cf. *infra*, pp. 1181 et seq.

ous annexes, an archivium, a treasury, and doubtless also a lodging for the priest, constituting a *domus ecclesia*.¹⁰

The above are merely a few examples.¹¹ In addition, we know that Gregory Thaumaturgus erected his episcopal church in the midst of the city of Neocæsarea.¹² The *Didascalia Apostolorum*¹³ implies that the worship described therein was celebrated in suitable buildings which were already real churches, and two other valuable testimonies, one from the pagan philosopher Porphyry,¹⁴ complaining of the ample edifices, μεγίστους οίκους, which Christians were constructing in his time (between 270 and 280), and the other from Eusebius, describing how, in the period between the Valerian and Diocletian persecutions, great churches were built, combine to show us that at least for numerous and lengthy periods, the cultural life of the Church of the third century had ceased to take place in secret.¹⁵

§ 4. THE TENDENCIES TOWARDS LAXITY

The Contagion of the World

While the morals of Christians remained in the third century more or less what they were previously, what we may call the gen-

¹⁰ Cf. M. J. Rostovtzeff, *La dernière campagne de fouilles de Doura-Europos*, in *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1932, pp. 314 et seq.; *The Excavations at Dura-Europos conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters, Preliminary Report of Fifth Session of Work*, Oct. 1931-March 1932, edited by M. J. Rostovtzeff (the study of the Christian chapel in chs. vii and viii is by C. Hopkins), New Haven, 1934. See also F. Cumont, *Fresques chrétiennes du III^e siècle découvertes en Syrie*, in *Byzantion*, Vol. VII, 1932, pp. 511 et seq.; Du Mesnil du Buisson, *Rapport sur la sixième campagne de fouilles à Doura-Europos (Syrie)*, in *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1933, pp. 200 et seq.; G. de Jerphanion, *Bulletin d'archéologie chrétienne*, in *Orientalia Christiana*, Vol. XXVIII, 1932, pp. 377 et seq.; N. Aubert, *Les fouilles de Doura-Europos, Note sur les origines de l'iconographie chrétienne*, in *Bulletin Monumental*, 1934, pp. 397 et seq.

¹¹ On the various Christian churches recently discovered, see J. P. Kirsch, *Die vorkonstantinischen christlichen Kulturgebäude in Lichte der neuesten Entdeckungen im Osten*, in *Römische Quartalschrift*, Vol. XLIV, 1933, pp. 15 et seq.

¹² St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Discourse on the Life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus* (Migne, P.G., Vol. XLVI, col. 923).

¹³ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 713 et seq. and *supra*, pp. 1000 et seq.

¹⁴ Fr., 76. On the fragments of Porphyry, cf. Vol. III, pp. 887 et seq.

¹⁵ *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, i, 5-6. Cf. Bk. III, p. 808.

eral tone of Christian life differed somewhat from what it was in the second century. For Christians were ever increasing in numbers, and, from the little flock which they still formed at the beginning of the Antonine era, they became progressively a minority not to be neglected, and in some cases a considerable one. Indeed, in certain regions they were on the point of forming the majority of the population. By the very fact of their increase they were involved to a greater extent in the common life, to which they brought the leaven of a higher ideal; but at the same time they were affected more and more by their closer contact with their surroundings. This acted like a kind of contagion, and while the ideal itself was not lowered, the proportion of Christians whose life fully reflected it tended rather to diminish as their total numbers increased. The heroic tension of the first two centuries was relaxed, especially during the periods of peace which intervened between persecutions which were indeed more general than previously and momentarily more implacable, but at the same time more limited in their duration.

Relaxation and Asceticism

Briefly, the worldly spirit gained ground among the Christians, or at least increased its influence somewhat upon them, as Christianity progressed in the world. This serves to explain practices which would probably have astonished the faithful of the first two centuries. Convinced and sincere Christians deferred their baptism, lacking the courage required in fulfilling all its obligations. On the other hand, penance became more accessible; though purity of life remained always a strict obligation upon the faithful, who could not fail in continence outside marriage without grave fault, the modification by Pope Callistus of the penitential discipline on this matter is a sufficiently revealing indication of a lowering of morals which was almost inevitable in view of the growth of the original little flock. True, at the opposite pole to the lukewarm and the weak there were also rigorists, who endeavoured to propagate a morality more severe than that of the Gospel. Thus the Encratites (ἐγκρατεῖς, *continentes*) nourished their zeal by the narratives of the apocryphal books, gospels not received by the Church, or pious romances falsely represented as histories of the apostles, such as the so-called Acts of Paul, John, Peter, Andrew and Thomas,¹ some of which go back to

¹ Cf. *supra*, pp. 986 *et seq.*

the second half of the second century while others belong to the beginning of the third. These all preached abstention from marriage and from the use of meat and wine. The exaggerations of these Encratites threatened indeed to do harm to true asceticism. Yet we find some of them perhaps among the best Christians, such as Alcibiades in the second century, who was one of the Lyons martyrs, and in the third century the martyr Pionius at Smyrna,² who seems, according to his *Passion*, to have adopted the Encratite custom of consecrating the Eucharist with bread and water.³

While the Church always regarded the Encratite exaggerations with disfavour, she encouraged, as we have seen, the ascetical practices of a chosen few, such as continence and voluntary virginity.⁴ These chosen few might serve as a model and an encouragement for the mass of people, to whom indeed ordinary morality already presented sufficient difficulties. Even the clergy, when relaxation set in at a time when heroism might be laid aside, did not always set a good example. When, after the Decian persecution, the Christian people of the dioceses of Legio and Asturica, and of Emerita, rose against the two bishops, Basilides and Martial, who had asked for or accepted certificates of sacrifice,⁵ other complaints were brought forward also, or at least against one of them, for Martial of Emerita had been seen frequenting the profane feasts of a burial college. St. Cyprian, who had to pronounce on his case, tells us also that in his time there were too many bishops who were business men, accepting positions in the administration of estates, frequenting markets and practising usury.

The Church and Usury

The last-mentioned matter was nevertheless one of those on which the moralists of Christian antiquity always displayed the greatest severity. Lending money at interest was universally condemned by the Fathers,⁶ doubtless because it was condemned also

² Cf. Bk. III, p. 796.

³ At any rate it is said that on the morning of the day of his arrest he had taken *panem sanctum et aquam*. Cf. also the letter of St. Cyprian (*Epist.*, lxxiii) to Cæcilius concerning this abuse.

⁴ Cf. *supra*, p. 1105.

⁵ Cf. Bk. III, p. 794.

⁶ Numerous texts, with a general outline of the question, will be found in I. Seipel, *Die Wirthschaftsethischen Lehren der Kirchenväter*, Vienna, 1907, pp. 162 *et seq.*

in the Bible,⁷ because it had not then the function which it possesses in the modern world,⁸ and because by reason of the abuse to which it was inherently liable, it was not distinguished from usury properly so called and which for us is characterised by an excessive rate of interest.⁹ This is a matter always difficult to determine, and the condemnation in principle of a practice without which one can hardly imagine the economic life of to-day was not unaccompanied by the drawback of leading to almost inevitable financial failures. The sanctions such as those laid down by the Council of Elvira¹⁰ are a most evident proof that such failures were at that time fairly frequent among the faithful. The letters of St. Cyprian reveal that bad examples came from those in high places.¹¹ The Bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, who was deposed in 268 because of the heresies he professed, gave an especially bad example. In him we have already the type of the ostentatious prelate, savouring more of this world than of Christ, and to whom money counted for much. He combined with his episcopal functions a high position in the public finances.

⁷ For instance, St. Cyprian (*Testimoniorum libri tres*, III, xlvi) condemns usury because we read in *Psalm* 14: "quia pecuniam non dedit ad usuram, non movebitur in æternum," and in *Ezechiel*: "homo qui erit justus . . . pecuniam suam in usuram non dabit."

⁸ On the essentially parasitical nature of usury in ancient times, in a state of things in which "the activity of capitalists was foreign to the creation of values," cf. the penetrating pages of G. Salvioi, *Le capitalisme dans le monde antique, Etude sur l'histoire de l'économie romaine* (French translation by A. Bonnet, Paris, 1906), pp. 227-228, and especially pp. 238-242. Various texts, among them being Lactantius, *Epitome*, xliv, and *Divin. institut.*, vi, 18, and St. Hilary, *Tract. in psalm.*, xiv, xv, show that loans the interest on which was condemned were regarded only as a service rendered to a man momentarily embarrassed, so that it would be wrong to profit by his difficulties in asking back more than one had lent to him.

⁹ Tertullian (*Adversus Marcionem*, iv, 17) seems however, at first sight, to distinguish *usura* from *fœnus* or loans at interest, *usura* being according to him the *redundantia* of these. But it is evident that the *fœnus* itself is regarded by him as incompatible with evangelical morality. See also the expression of Cyprian quoted on p. 1039, n. 1. On the other hand, it would seem from the canons of fourth century councils concerning usury in clerics that usury on the part of the ordinary faithful may have been tolerated provided it was confined within moderate limits, or at any rate it was not accompanied by ecclesiastical penalties. St. Ambrose will even say (*Expositio evangelica*, IX, 19) that there may be "good bankers."

¹⁰ Canons 19 and 20.

¹¹ He also says in the *De lapsis*, vi, that during the long period of peace preceding the Decian persecution, there were many bishops who practised usury—"usuris multiplicantibus fœnus augere."

The Wealth of the Churches

Further, the development of ecclesiastical property, rapidly increasing through the liberality of the faithful, caused Christian leaders already at this time to resemble earthly potentates, and though they may have been characterised by personal asceticism, they came to be regarded as the holders of enviable material positions. Already in the third century the Bishop of Rome was an important personage and his office also important in the eyes even of the Roman authorities, who may perhaps have attributed to him sometimes more than he really possessed. As soon as Pope Sixtus had been put to death in the Valerian persecution,¹² his first deacon, Laurence, was—at least if we are to believe the account of St. Ambrose, better informed perhaps on the motives than on the circumstances of the martyr's sufferings¹³—called upon to give up the treasures which were thought to belong to the Church. Probably their amount was over estimated, but they were not imaginary, and this wealth, though originating from and destined for Christian charity, combined with the moral prestige of the position of the holders, was not free from the danger of dazzling and upsetting the balance of those honoured with its charge.

The Church and the Age. Adjustments and Contaminations

If there were shepherds who thus succumbed to temptations to pride or to the spirit of lucre, these were only individual human weaknesses, an almost inevitable consequence of the numerical extension of the Church and of the external growth of its authority. Some other contaminations with the spirit of the age seem stranger: The special opponent of Paul of Samosata, Malchion, was "director of the Hellenic school" at Antioch, that is, he superintended a school the teaching of which was of pagan inspiration—a very extraordinary post for a Christian. "Anatoleus the mathematician, head of the Aristotelian school of Alexandria, was raised to the episcopate towards the end of the third century; the director of the imperial factory of purple established at Tyre was a priest of Antioch."¹⁴ We have already mentioned¹⁵ that believers in Christ had

¹² Cf. Bk. III, p. 803.

¹³ Cf. Bk. III, p. 803, n. 6.

¹⁴ Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 521.

¹⁵ Cf. *supra*, pp. 1153-1154.

consented to become flamens of their cities, that is, pagan priests. It was indeed a singular situation, and one which was paradoxical from a twofold point of view. In the years preceding the final persecution, the Government showed itself so complaisant that to meet the Christian holders of the official priesthood it arranged for a modification of the religious obligations which these offices implied. "It was possible to be high priest of Rome and Augustus without offering sacrifice to these official divinities,"¹⁶ the cult of which had by now ceased to be really religious. That is doubtless the reason why Christians consented to hold offices which had thus been secularised, but none the less this constituted an abuse and a certain scandal and we can understand why the Council of Elvira condemned it, though as we have remarked the condemnation was a somewhat severe one.

We can at least infer once more from such practices¹⁷ that the Church did not frown upon the Empire as much as has sometimes been said, and that the Empire did not always adopt a warlike attitude towards her. As has so often been the case throughout history, two tendencies existed among the Christians of that time: that of the intransigents, to follow whom meant, if things were pushed to an extreme, putting oneself outside ordinary life; and that of the conciliators, who were quite ready for the necessary adaptations, but some of whom gradually came near to forgetting that they were Christians.

§ 5. THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF CHRISTIANS

Renewal of Trials

These accommodations and adaptations, sometimes carried too far, are explicable only by the lengthy periods of peace which, divided by sudden and terrible outbreaks of renewed hostility, characterised the relations between the Church and the Empire throughout the third century. These lasting periods of calm certainly

¹⁶ Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. I, p. 521.

¹⁷ We must distinguish these adaptations from the fact that there were Christians not only among those connected with the stage, which was then characterised by a permanent immorality, but also among the gladiators, and even among women of the city and pimps. But these were, of course, professions which were incompatible with evangelical morality, and which a Christian could take up or retain only at the price of that discord between belief and conduct, examples of which are to be found in all times, and which in no way imply any change in the requirements of Christian ethics.

counted for much in this comparative slackening of the Christian springs of life, which, it must indeed be admitted, manifested itself from time to time when a sudden call for heroism sounded upon ears unprepared for it. At these times there were innumerable apostasies, as first of all in the Decian persecution, which at one time could give the Emperor the illusion of victory in the inexorable fight renewed at his orders against Christianity. On the other hand, the equally implacable measures of Valerian, coming as they did very soon after those of Decius, and finding Christian souls stiffened by the recent trials, met straightaway with a passive resistance which, while decimating the ranks of Christians, signalled at the same time the defeat of the imperial power in its new war.

When Diocletian unleashed the persecution for the last time, after forty peaceful years, we once more encounter many collapses. We also see several people clever enough to escape both heroism and capitulation. But heroes were not lacking—indeed, no persecution produced as many as did this final assault which, in some provinces, continued for ten years.

The Sources of Christian Heroism: Prayer

The race of heroes never died out, for never, even in the periods of relative ease, did that which was its constant source cease to flow: namely, the religious life itself of the Christian—a life maintained by participation in the sacred mysteries and by prayer, liturgical and collective, as we have mentioned elsewhere,¹ which accompanied it, and also by intimate, private or domestic prayer which, as in earlier times² and in those which followed, was one of the distinctive features of the daily life of the disciples of Christ. Prayer, from the morning and evening vocal invocations to the meditation which was cultivated by souls aiming at an ideal of interior life and which was already guided by masters such as Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria or Origen, remained throughout an integral part of a Christian's day.

Christian Spirituality and Theology

In some cases, prayer was accompanied by intellectual enquiries of a religious character, and an endeavour to reach a greater knowl-

¹ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 456 *et seq.*, and Bk. III, pp. 696-698, 746.

² Cf. Bk. II, p. 507.

edge of the truths of faith. Clement of Alexandria and Origen, their successors in the Catechetical School of Alexandria, Hippolytus at Rome, and their imitators elsewhere, all had their disciples. Lucian of Antioch, even in his Christological errors, and Lactantius in his apologetical works,³ were inspired by the same spirit. The desire of all, even of those who were aware that they were not addressing themselves to ordinary people, and possibly had no intention of doing so, was nevertheless to reach an ever increasing audience.

Christianity and Culture

On the other hand, if we leave aside those doubtful Christians attracted by Syncretistic dreams,⁴ there was scarcely any regard amongst Christians as such for profane culture. Yet those who belonged to the classes which were traditionally given to culture did not in fact renounce it, especially as it might be utilised in defence of Christian truth. A good apologist should make use even of the arms of his opponent, and more than one Christian writer wielded them with a dexterity which shows that it was still quite natural to employ them. "The culture of an Origen was in no way inferior to that of a Celsus. . . . The correspondence of Julius the African with Origen . . . manifests the serious tone of their criticism."⁵ Commodian put poetry, and Arnobius and Lactantius philosophy to the service of Christ; they found their readers, and this shows that there was no divorce between culture and Christianity.

But as long as the situation of the Church in the midst of the Roman world remained precarious, the primary interests of Christians were other than intellectual, and it was not possible that, in the presence of a renewal of persecutions which in the name of the ancient discipline massacred them in their thousands, Christians should have seen anything attractive in the real face of ancient culture. It had indeed a singularly cruel countenance.

The Taste for Apocryphal Literature

The mass of the faithful could not in any case be much interested in speculation. But what a taste they had for literature of a particu-

³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 1086, 1090 *et seq.*

⁴ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 875 *et seq.*

⁵ P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, p. 11.

lar kind! The spate of apocryphal works, imaginary *Gospels* or pretended *Acts of Apostles*,⁶ implies the presence of an abundant public ready to read them. True, a fairly large number of them emanated from Gnostic or heterodox sources. Nevertheless the fairly widespread knowledge of these works in the great Church, and their relatively long vogue make us think that they were esteemed not only in circles which were doctrinally unsound. Did not some of them, such as those concerning the infancy of the Blessed Virgin, end by finding an entry even into Christian tradition?⁷

Christians and the Supreme Sacrifice

Yet it was not in the suspect teaching of this questionable religious literature, any more than in the most attractive features of pagan literature, unknown or little known by the majority, that Christians found their rule of life, and still less the strength to die. The sources of their heroism were only those which the Church authentically offered them in the name of the true Christ, and the attitude of so many martyrs, who invoke only his love—love received and love given—as a motive for the sacrifice of their lives, proves this abundantly.

How many indeed were called upon to make this supreme sacrifice in the period we are studying? Though the third century was a period of discontinuous persecutions, beginning and ending at precise orders from the secular power, instead of the permanent menace with its sporadic and intermittent though frequent realisation found in the preceding century, we must not overlook the fact that these persecutions were severe and general. The Diocletian persecution added to the violence and wideness which characterised those of Decius and Valerian a more lengthy duration.

⁶ Cf. *supra*, pp. 986 *et seq.*

⁷ The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin as a child in the Temple to consecrate there her youth to God, which has been made the subject of a feast of the Church, is related only in the apocryphal gospel known as the *Prot-evangelium of James*. True, the presentation of a child in the Temple was prescribed by the Law, and there is no reason to doubt that Mary's parents carried out the required legal observances.

[The Old Law, however, contemplated only the presentation of a male child, and "there was no such thing as a legal presentation of daughters" (Rev. E. R. Hull, S.J., *First Book of Our Lady*, p. 22). Nor was there "any optional function for such a presentation in the levitical law" (*ibid.*). But there was a ceremony for the purification of the mother, and another for the redeeming of a child vowed to the Lord, and that may explain the Presentation of Our Lady.—Tr.]

Thus, no less than in the previous period, though in different conditions, with less continuity but perhaps with greater intensity, the thought of martyrdom was still in the third century one of the habitual ideas of a Christian. In order to get an exact idea of Christian life from the time of the Severi down to that of Diocletian, we have shown that it could be carried on openly, not apart from the general life, but on the contrary sharing in this, while keeping its own character in the midst of surroundings which became peaceful during several fairly long intervals. But opposition and even hatred had not altogether disappeared, and we find these still at work at the beginning of the Diocletian persecution, and peace was succeeded by war after more or less lengthy intervals. Besides days of calm and of life in the open, there were days of crisis, when the Church had, so to speak, to retire within herself and return to her hidden life.

II. CHRISTIANS OUTSIDE THE WORLD

§ I. MARTYRDOM

The Thought of Martyrdom

In those periods of crisis, each Christian had to contemplate once more and keep before his eyes the prospect of martyrdom, and at Rome and elsewhere the Church returned to the catacombs and seemed almost prepared for a lengthy stay in these safe places, which even in better times she had never entirely abandoned.

The Christian literature of the third century is full of the idea of martyrdom. The *Ad martyres* of Tertullian, Origen's *Exhortation to the Martyrs*, some commentaries of Hippolytus and letters from Cyprian, are very significant in this respect.¹ These men had seen the shedding of the blood of "their friends, their neighbours, and disciples persecuted for the Faith, and some of them had written while awaiting the fatal moment when their own names would appear on the list of victims."² Martyrological narratives of an excellent character, in which the description of a tender love for Christ

¹ These texts are mentioned in H. Delehaye, *L'origine du culte des Martyrs*, 2nd edn., Brussels, 1933, pp. 4-5.

² Delehaye, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

and an ardent desire to suffer for him and be united to him thereby, are combined with a calmness of narration and a moderation of tone full of dignity, as in the African *Passion* of the deacon James and the lector Marianus, put to death at Lambesa in Numidia in 259.³ These narratives display the same resignation, and trusting and filial spirit.

The Number of the Martyrs in the Last Century of Persecution

As to the number of these witnesses for Christ, who paid with their lives for their refusal to deny him, we can only say once more that it is quite impossible to give any precise estimate.⁴ While the Decian persecution probably led to more temporary apostates than to martyrs, that of Valerian, which prohibited any religious assembly, must have been especially deadly. It is true that when Cyprian died at Carthage, his people all escorted him to the place of execution and do not seem to have met with any interference;⁵ but the martyrs of the *Massa Candida*⁶ certainly seem to have represented the whole Christian population of Utica, put to death with its shepherd. And in numerous *Passions* we read that spectators at an execution who gave any indication of sympathy for their brethren in the Faith about to die, were immediately put to torment with them. From the sober *Passion of James and Marianus* again we gather that for many days in the regions of Lambesa and Cirta alone, the executioners were constantly busy, methodically slaying in relays, first laity and then clergy. As to the Diocletian persecution, more intense than that of Valerian and four or five times longer, at least in the Eastern half of the Empire, it may be using a trite phrase but it is also the historic truth to say that, in spite of the still very numerous apostasies, torrents of blood were shed.⁷ If the Roman Empire had a population of about a hundred millions, more than half being in the East, and if the East certainly comprised towards the end of the third century the strongest Christian minorities, which in some of the most populous provinces such as Asia Minor were on the way to becoming the majority, we may well ask what must have been the effect of an edict ordering the death of every Christian who did

³ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 804-805.

⁴ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 516 *et seq.*

⁵ Cf. Bk. III, p. 804.

⁶ Cf. Bk. III, p. 805.

⁷ Cf. the figures on p. 1173, n. 8.

not abjure his faith. To infer that under these circumstances the number of victims must have exceeded a million would not be an absurdity in itself. But apart from the apostates, many Christians succeeded in hiding themselves, or in avoiding the interrogations. Doubtless the Roman police also—whether through carelessness or bribery—more than once closed their eyes, and there was a considerable difference in degree of cruelty between the theoretical stipulations of the law and its practical applications. The ease with which churches were reconstituted everywhere immediately after the tortures seems to imply that the majority of their members survived. But even if only one in every hundred perished, allowing that the number of Christians had multiplied tenfold from Septimius Severus to Diocletian, the total number of Christians put to death during the great periods of slaughter which succeeded one another at intervals, becoming less and less frequent but more and more deadly, from about the year 200 until the Peace of Constantine, would amount to hundreds of thousands. The largeness of the number certainly makes one hesitate, while on the other hand it is quite certain that the proportion of known martyrs to unknown victims, *quorum nomina Deus scit*, would then be a very small one. Must we infer, then, that there were more collapses than victims? The conclusion does not necessarily follow, whatever weaknesses may have been manifested under Decius and, at least in some provinces, under Diocletian. The *Passion of James and Marianus*⁸ tells us that hundreds of Christians were decapitated at Lambesa in 259, yet we know the names of five only, James, Marianus, the Roman knight Aemilianus, and two young women, Tertulla and Antonia. The persecutions of the third century, and that of Diocletian which closed the era, were violent explosions occurring between long periods of calm: it does not necessarily follow that the number of martyrs was small.

Origins of the Cultus of Martyrs

Witnesses to Christ, to whom they thus proved their love, and who in turn rewarded them accordingly in the heavenly kingdom, the martyrs were, in the eyes of their brethren remaining here

⁸ Cf. *supra*, p. 1172. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, ix, 3, speaks of tens and hundreds of victims perishing daily for years in the Thebaid during the last persecution.

below, glorious warriors who had a right to be honoured, and whose intercession could not fail to be powerful with God. From this idea alone, so natural, arose the cultus of the martyrs, which was to assume such proportions after the peace of the Church, but which began already in the second century. We see already in 155 the Pagan authorities refusing to allow the Christians of Smyrna to have the body of St. Polycarp, on the pretence that he would very soon have taken the place of Christ in the worship of the faithful,⁹ and the church of that city, in the very letter in which it narrates the martyrdom of its venerated bishop, announces its resolution to celebrate each year the anniversary or *natale*, the day of the birth of the saint into everlasting life. A hundred years later, a triumphal procession conducted the body of St. Cyprian to the cemetery at Carthage. But while the earthly remains of heroes put to death for their faith were venerated in this way, their souls were also invoked as intercessors particularly potent with the Lord. From very early times, the custom of asking the prayers of the faithful who had died in the peace of the Lord was widespread; epigraphy provides abundant proof of this.¹⁰ But naturally by preference people addressed their petitions to those among the dead whose exceptional merits rendered them particularly pleasing to God. Invocations thus tended to be more and more restricted to the martyrs, as is shown once more by epigraphy.¹¹ There are also literary texts attributing to the martyrs an especial power of intercession. Origen, exhorting his friend Ambrose to confess the faith, says to him that after his death his prayer will be even more efficacious for his own people than during his lifetime.¹² We find similar indications in the *Acts* of the martyrs. At Alexandria the martyr Potamiciena, in return for the good offices of the soldier charged with the duty of conducting her to the torment, by name Basilides, promises that she will intercede for him when she comes into the presence of the Lord.¹³ "Cornelius and Cyprian, both awaiting martyrdom, undertook to help one another unceasingly by their prayers, even if one of them should be called to God,"¹⁴ and the Bishop of Carthage, exhorting virgins to perse-

⁹ *Martyrium Polycarpi*, xvii, 2 (ed. Funk, *Opera patrum apostolicorum*, Vol. I, p. 282, Tübingen, 1901, re-edited by Bihlmeyer, 1924).

¹⁰ Numerous texts collected in Delehaye, *op. cit.*, pp. 102 *et seq.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹² *Exhort. ad Martyr.*, xxxvii.

¹³ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VI, v. Cf. Bk. III, p. 754.

¹⁴ Cyprian, *Epist.*, lx, 5.

verance, begged them ¹⁵ not to forget him when they entered into glory.” ¹⁶

It is not at all surprising that the invocation of the martyrs should have grown, and that it should have been practised especially at their tombs. We have already mentioned ¹⁷ what fervour surrounded the memories of St. Peter and St. Paul at St. Sebastian. This is a special instance, which the unique place held by the two apostles in the history of the Roman Church brings into prominence. But everywhere the tombs of the martyrs became the centres of pious exercises. A cultus, discreet indeed so long as persecutions or threats of persecution continued, began thus to be organised near the remains of the martyrs.¹⁸ The cemeteries, and especially in times which were still difficult, the hidden cemeteries—in other words, the Catacombs—became after the great massacres the natural places for religious assemblies and for worship.

§ 2. CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE CATACOMBS

Place of the Catacombs in Christian Life

The precarious situation of the Church which continued down to the beginning of the fourth century made it necessary, in spite of the growing toleration which preceded its legal recognition, not to advertise too much its increasing hold upon the world which it was gradually conquering. Though in Rome there were already several churches, these remained almost wholly confined in an outer zone;¹ and the “headquarters” of the Roman community, the centre of the ecclesiastical administration, seems to have remained in the suburbs throughout the third century.² From the region situated between the

¹⁵ Delehayé, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

¹⁶ *De habitu virginum*, iv.

¹⁷ Cf. Bk. I, p. 291.

¹⁸ At the moment when Pionius was arrested during the Decian persecution, he was celebrating, with the church of Smyrna, the anniversary of the martyrdom of Polycarp.

¹ It must be added that this outer zone was possibly not the least populated, for the central quarters grouped around the Field of Mars comprised a greater proportion of public buildings and reserved spaces.

² Some have wondered whether, before the installing of the seat of the Roman episcopal curia in the Lateran under Constantine, this had not been for a while established near the site of the present church of St. Laurence in Damaso. De Rossi (*De origine, historia, indicibus scrinii et bibliothecæ sedis apostolicæ*, preface to Vol. I of the *Bibliotheca apostolica Vaticana: Codices latini*, Rome, 1886)

Via Nomentana and the Via Salaria it had passed to the Appian Way. But it was always in the Catacombs that the heart of the Church was to be found—either in the Ostrian cemetery, or that of Priscilla, or that of Callistus, situated close to that of St. Sebastian.

The Development of the Roman Catacombs in the Third Century

From the second half of the second century until the end of the third, these underwent a very great development. At the beginning of this period, Callistus, still a deacon, enlarged the crypts of Lucina on the Appian Way, and formed the great cemetery which became *par excellence* that of the Roman community, which owed its ownership to the liberality of a great family, possibly the Cæcili. It continued to be known by the name of Callistus, although he himself was not buried there.³ Off the same Appian Way there came into existence the catacomb of Prætextatus, the *Cæmeterium Majus*, an extension perhaps of the Ostrianum, on the Via Nomentana, and the Catacomb of Calepodius on the Via Aurelia, in which Callistus was interred. In the course of the third century, new increases accompanied the growth of Roman Christianity, which may have amounted to some fifty thousand souls about the middle of this period. At that time we find the cemeteries of Pamphilus, Maximus, Trason, that of the Giordiani on the Via Salaria, those of St. Hippolytus and St. Laurence on the Via Tiburtina, that called "inter duas lauros" on the Via Labicana, the cemetery "ad Catacumbas" ⁴ known later on as that of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way, and that of Pontian on the Via Portuensis. The ownership of these cemeteries, most of which were possessed at first by private individuals, gradually passed to the Church, which probably possessed them all at the beginning of the fourth century, as may be inferred from the arrangements of places adapted for worship, and the erection there of basilicas once the persecutions had ceased.

thought he had proved that the pontifical archives were in this place though the centre of administration was transferred to the Lateran, and he inferred from this that in a previous period this centre had likewise been at St. Laurence. But the establishment of the archives in this place has not in fact been proved conclusively. Cf. L. Duchesne, *Note sur la topographie de Rome au moyen âge: II. Les titres presbyteraux et les diaconies*, in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, published by the French School in Rome, Vol. VII, 1887, p. 217, n. 1.

³ Cf. *supra*, p. 1128.

⁴ On the origin of the name, cf. Bk. II, p. 521.

Catacombs in the Various Provinces

The same certainly was true also of other cities. The Catacombs of Naples, Tuscany, Sicily, the province of Africa, Alexandria or Asia Minor became sooner or later the property of the Church, like those of Rome. We should perhaps add to this ecclesiastical property some burial crypts such as those of St. Victor at Marseilles, or in the city of Sopianæ in Pannonia (now Pecs, in Hungary).⁵

Christian Worship in the Catacombs

The change brought about in the juridical status of these great properties involved certain material consequences. The heads of the ecclesiastical communities, henceforth free to administer them as they desired, took the necessary steps to organise religious life there, either below the ground or on the surface, but always in contact with these subterranean cities, which in certain circumstances and especially in times of persecution, would become its chief centre. Thus Pope Fabian instituted in the cemetery of Callistus and other Roman cemeteries various edifices, oratories and places of assembly, usually arranged close to the most important entrances to these catacombs. On the other hand, the substitution of corporate possession by the Church for that of the former private owners exposed these ecclesiastical lands still more to attacks by the civil authorities when hostilities were reopened. We must remark again⁶ that this does not imply that the civil authorities had the cemeteries systematically profaned, for respect towards burial places would prevent this. But emperors like Decius and Valerian prohibited entry into the cemeteries, and confiscated the religious edifices which had been erected there. The Christians were themselves liable to be arrested there, if not massacred on the spot. In this manner were apprehended, in the cemetery of Callistus, Pope Sixtus and the deacons Felicissimus and Agapitus, in the Valerian persecution. It was then that, in order to protect themselves, defend the mystery of their rites, and ward off the violations of tombs which might result, even though not originally intended, from police raids, they made narrow passages and filled in others, bricked up the entrances to sandpits or

⁵ Cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, Paris, 1918, pp. 191 et seq., and E. Dyggve, *Das Mausoleum in Pecs*, in *Pannonia-Konyvtar*, 3, Pecs, 1933.

⁶ Cf. Bk. I, pp. 291-293.

arenarii, which had sometimes been used as outlets, and destroyed main stairways, so as temporarily to sever communications between them and a hostile world. Such a state of things could not last, but the material traces of these arrangements for a time of danger have remained visible down to our own time.

§ 3. THE CATACOMBS AND CHRISTIAN ART

Paintings in the Catacombs

The increased use of the Catacombs, both as places of refuge and as places for liturgical assembly and also as the centres for the growing cultus of the martyrs, could not fail to link them more closely with the faithful. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the faithful were constantly moved by the desire to add to and improve their ornamentation. Paintings continued to develop there from the end of the second century down to the last persecution.

Symbolism

Many of these display the same characteristics as those of the preceding period. The symbolism which appeared in the second half of the second century, permitting the representation of the subjects of the Christian Faith while retaining a certain air of mystery, continued. The Lamb is a constant feature everywhere in the paintings of the third century; we also find Orpheus with dog and goat at his feet, and at his side two doves perched on a tree, figuring Christ drawing the hearts of all. This is on a vault in the cemetery of St. Callistus, and belongs to this period. The protests of Tertullian against the image of the Good Shepherd symbolising the divine mercy, which was displeasing to his rigoristic mind, suffice to show its diffusion. The *Orans*, the dove, the fish, the anchor, the crown which recalls a text of St. Paul,¹ the horse finishing its race, which recalls another,² similarly express, in inscriptions graven in marble on the walls of the catacombs and in the frescoes which decorate them, the immortal hopes of Christians. One of the most curious allegorical paintings appears on the panels of the vestibule of the

¹ "Every one that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself . . . and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one" (I Cor., ix, 25).

² "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course" (II Tim., iv, 7).

upper Catacomb of St. Januarius at Naples: three young girls are building a tower, in accordance with the allegory of the *Pastor* of Hermas,³ in which the writer says he beheld twelve virgins building a tower, symbolising the Church, with stones taken from the waters, symbolising the faithful regenerated by the waters of baptism.⁴

Developing the ideas of the traditional teaching, we find Biblical episodes, and more rarely perhaps, evangelical and sacramental illustrations on the vaultings or the walls, such as the tree and serpent of the earthly paradise in the cemetery of Priscilla, the sacrifice of Abraham in that of Domitilla, the adoration of the Magi in the Capella Græca, and also in the cemetery of Priscilla, as well as in that of SS. Peter and Marcellinus, and the Eucharistic banquet in the cemetery of Callistus.⁵

Tendency towards Realism

Side by side with this ornamental cycle so characteristic of primitive Christian art and so closely connected with the hidden life of the catacombs, we find some new conceptions which are antithetical up to a point, and related perhaps with the other aspect of Christian life, now more closely mingled with the world by reason of the progress of Christian propaganda outside the times of persecution. These are characterised by a certain realism. "Gradually the paintings become bolder, and in place of an *Orans* vague in form, the features are individualised, and thus we get a revival of the taste for portraiture so dear to the Romans. The nose, the mouth, the face are not depicted in a haphazard way; they depict, without any doubt, the proper physiognomy of the deceased, in the medium of marble or brick; the clothing or hair depict the social position."⁶ Thus, in the cemetery of St. Soter, in the midst of a paradise in which the peacocks drinking from goblets show the continuance of the symbolical tradition, we find two and also three *orantes* which are certainly not purely symbolical, for each one has a name written above the head.⁷ A consecrated virgin figures as an *Orans* in the cemetery

³ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 447 *et seq.*

⁴ R. Garrucci, *Storia dell' arte cristiana nei primi otto secoli della Chiesa*, 6 vol., Prato, 1872-1880, Vol. II, pl. xcv.

⁵ Cf. J. Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms*, pl. xli, 3.

⁶ H. Chéramy, *Les catacombes romaines*, Paris, 1932, pp. 70-71.

⁷ A. Perate, *L'archéologie chrétienne*, Paris, 1892, p. 115, fig. 72.

of Priscilla, but the veil covering her head expresses in a precise way what she had been on earth.⁸ In a fresco in the cemetery of Domitilla, the martyr Petronilla introduces into heaven the soul of a Christian lady represented as an *Orans*, while the inscribed name, *Veneranda*, testifies to her individuality.⁹

A certain number of figured monuments, moreover, show us the great veneration which characterised the memory of the martyrs, but there are no mural paintings of this nature belonging to the third century. The portrait of St. Agnes, always depicted as an *Orans*, but clothed in the vesture of a young Patrician girl, is found on the base of several cups,¹⁰ and glass vessels or lamps depict the portraits of Christians condemned to the mines or delivered up to beasts in the amphitheatre.¹¹

Christian Art in the East

The tendency manifested, though still with a certain reserve, in the paintings of the Roman catacombs, is also found, but even more clearly, at the same time in the eastern extreme of the Empire. The painters who worked in the Christian chapel of Dura-Europos introduced there, besides Adam and Eve, Moses, the Good Shepherd and his flock, certain subjects such as Jesus walking in the waters, or the holy women at the Tomb, which do not seem to have been treated at Rome during the same time. The realism and truthful aim which distinguish these works is perhaps in greater contrast to the symbolism of primitive painting in the West. Even so, the types retain a conventional character in some respects. It seems indeed that the Dura paintings are inspired by conventions which prevailed later on in eastern iconography, and which at the commencement manifested not only the inevitable influence of the pagan models which the first Christians had before their eyes, but also more unexpected Jewish influence, at least in the matter of scenes from the Old Testament. In spite of the prohibitions of the Law concerning the representation of the human form, the Jews had employed artists to decorate their *hypogea* and even their synagogues, as we see

⁸ J. Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms*, pl. lxxx.

⁹ *Bullettino di Archeologia cristiana*, Vol. XIII, 1875, pl. I.

¹⁰ R. Garrucci, *op. cit.*, pl. cxc and cxci.

¹¹ *Bullettino di Archeologia cristiana*, Vol. XIII, 1875, pl. I.

from the Jewish necropolises of Carthage and Rome,¹² and one of the most remarkable discoveries found at Dura was that of a synagogue embellished with paintings illustrating biblical incidents and especially the story of Moses and the Exodus.¹³ There does not seem much room for doubt that the decoration of the synagogue influenced that of the Christian chapel at Dura.

The Special Characteristics of the Early Christian Paintings

The influences to which primitive Christian art was thus subject, and which it could hardly avoid, did not prevent it from having from the first its own features which gave it a character of its own from the start. Though it made use of pagan motives as an element of decoration, it remained an essentially chaste art, and it banished all voluptuous elements. As a symbolical art, it had for initiates the value of a secret language. "Being closely linked with the religious life from which it proceeded and which it tried to express, in the third century it had, by choosing its figures and scenes, already succeeded in constructing a veritable system of religious iconography."¹⁴

The Christian Sarcophagi

Sculpture had its place side by side with painting. Sarcophagi, whether deposited in the catacombs or in cemeteries in the open air, were decorated with bas-reliefs which from the third century onwards likewise display a specifically Christian character. Symbolism here is at least equally prominent. The Good Shepherd carrying his sheep on his shoulders is a subject more frequently treated perhaps on the sides of sarcophagi than on the vaultings of the catacombs. Doubtless there was an especial desire to recall this sign of forgive-

¹² Cf. O. Marucchi, *La catacombe romane*, ed. 1902, pp. 234, 247, and R. Cagnat and P. Gauchler, *Les monuments antiques de la Tunisie*, Paris, 1898, Vol. I, pp. 151 et seq.

¹³ Cf. F. Cumont, *La synagogue de Doura et ses peintures*, in *Byzantion*, Vol. VIII, 1933, pp. 373 et seq.; Clark Hopkins and Du Mesnil du Buisson, *La synagogue de Doura et ses peintures*, in *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, 1933, pp. 243 et seq.; Du Mesnil du Buisson, *La synagogue de Doura-Europos et ses peintures*, in *Revue Biblique*, Vol. XLIII, 1934, pp. 105 et seq.

¹⁴ L. Bréhier, *L'art chrétien, Son développement iconographique des origines à nos jours*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1928, p. 2.

ness and tenderness in an age which comprised so many *lapsi* besides martyrs and confessors. The sarcophagi on which, as on that of La Gayolle in Gaul,¹⁵ the Good Shepherd, facing the *Orans*, seems to revive hope in sinful souls, was a lively protest against the intransigent severity of a Tertullian or a Novatian, so pitiless towards human weaknesses.

Another figure recurs with significant frequency in the decoration of sarcophagi of this period, that of St. Peter. It is found much more often than that of St. Paul. From the beginning of the third century, the iconographic themes concerning the Prince of the Apostles are almost as manifold as the Christological themes. One of the earliest joins the figure of the Apostle with the miraculous spring in the desert and the baptism of the centurion Cornelius. Like his Master, Peter more than once carries a sheep on his shoulders, surrounded by other shepherds, symbolising his brethren in the episcopate. In other cases, again, he holds the keys, the figure of his spiritual power, or again he is depicted on his way to the martyrdom which terminated his life at Rome. The iconographic "cycle" of Peter is evidently an especially Roman cycle. We can recognise other apostolic cycles, more weakly represented, such as those of St. Paul and St. Thomas. There are also numerous sacramental representations, usually that of Baptism, depicted for instance in the form of the baptism of the Ethiopian instructed by the deacon Philip,¹⁶ or that of the Eucharistic banquet, as found on an Isaurian sarcophagus.¹⁷

Thus, we find, with an undeniable unity of religious inspiration, the same variety of themes in primitive Christian sculpture as in painting. These themes are not exclusively Roman like that of St. Peter, and the art of the sarcophagi is developed not only in Rome. The sarcophagi in southern Gaul, such as that of La Gayolle in the Var district, which is one of the earliest, and those of Arles are well-known examples. It is possible that the workshops of Arles were merely branches of those in Rome.

The Sources Inspiring Primitive Christian Art

The part which should be attributed to Rome in the history of primitive Christian art, which some regard as absolutely preponder-

¹⁵ L. Le Blant, *Les sarcophages chrétiens de la Gaule*, Paris, 1886, pl. lix.

¹⁶ On all this, see J. Wilpert, *I sarcophagi cristiani antichi*, Vol. I, pp. 1 et seq.

¹⁷ W. Ramsay, *Studies in the History and Art of the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire*, London, 1906, p. 6 and pl. 1.

ant,¹⁸ remains nevertheless the subject of controversy. The most recent discoveries, such as those of Christian monuments in various regions of the East, certainly seem to show that Christian art had no single origin, whether Roman or Eastern. Rather, it was in each region a reflection of local conditions. The graphic or sculptural iconography of the Roman catacombs which is elaborated in the course of the second century is indeed Roman. When it turns to the representation of biblical or evangelical scenes, it remains symbolical. We must not regard it as a mere illustration of the Old or New Testaments; it is more apologetical than historical in character. At Alexandria, and in Asia Minor and Syria, where the earliest productions of Christian art known to us range according to locality from the second half of the second century to the first half of the third, other preoccupations appear. The Syrian artists seek to reproduce the earthly appearance of personages who are the object of the veneration of the faithful. It is this realistic tendency which, as we have said, is to be noted at Dura, but it is found also in Rome in the third century, with a return to the art of portraiture.¹⁹

It remains true nevertheless that, viewed from the standpoint of the general history of art, the art of the paintings in the catacombs or of the bas reliefs on the sarcophagi in the first centuries is but "the supreme flowering of Hellenistic art." It is to the Alexandrian tradition that it owes its decorative freshness, which so much resembles that of Pompeii. It is also from the same source that it derives its truly decorative character, and also the somewhat childish idea of symmetry, which so rapidly becomes the rule in religious iconography. What is to be admired is that, with materials which were so banal and which had, so to speak, become public property, Christian artists were able, thanks to the ardour of their faith and the subtlety of their symbolism, to create an art which is really new in its spirit. It is rather difficult in the present state of knowledge to say which were the centres where this creation took place; the communications between the Christian communities in the Roman world were, moreover, sufficiently frequent to ensure that a practice adopted by one church would be transmitted rapidly to others.

"The cosmopolitan character at this time of Hellenistic art, of

¹⁸ E.g. Mgr. Wilpert, in the matter of sarcophagi.

¹⁹ Cf. W. Elliger, *Zur Entstehung und früher Entwicklung der altchristlichen Bildkunst*, in *Studien über christliche Denkmäler*, herausgegeben von J. Ficker, *Neue Folge der archäologischen Studien zum christlichen Altertum und Mittelalter*, Heft 23, Leipzig, 1934.

which Christian art is but a manifestation, prevents us from attributing its creation to one centre rather than another. Those who defend its Roman origin seek support in chronology. the figures of the *Orans* and the Good Shepherd appear in the Roman cemeteries at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century, which would seem to indicate that these themes are of Roman origin. The majority of the Eastern monuments are, it is true, later in date.”²⁰ But these Roman representations should perhaps themselves be dated about half a century later. Now, already in the second century there were at Alexandria catacombs decorated with paintings similar to those of Rome, and, “when we bear in mind the attraction which the Hellenistic East exercised on the Romans in the days of the Empire, we find it difficult to believe that the position was reversed in the one realm of Christian art. It was the Jews or Judaizing Christians of Syria or Alexandria who carried to Rome the Old Testament *motifs* such as those of Daniel among the lions or Noe in the Ark, and . . . a symbol like that of the fish certainly bears the mark of the East and even of Alexandria.”²¹ It has even been noticed that there are some resemblances between Christian art and the old Egyptian symbolism which cannot be due to chance. Like the burial art of the Pharaohs, Christian art was, in the first two centuries of its history, a system of symbols forming for the initiated a complete language. In this way it became a form of religious teaching: “from the beginning, beauty was for Christian artists only a means of giving more striking expression to the idea.”²²

But, viewed as a testimony to the life itself of the Christians of the first ages, this art, so simple, or even so limited in its methods of expression, takes on a new value and a more stirring meaning when we remember that it was, especially in the case of the art of the catacombs, the work of men who were trying in this way to translate the truths of the faith into the language of beauty, very often in presence of death or at least of danger, in places far from the light, in which the world’s hatred or incomprehension compelled them sometimes to hide themselves, and where they nevertheless carried on their work of teaching their brethren and rendering the homage of filial love to God by executing these works of art, inspired by a complete sincerity.

²⁰ L. Bréhier, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

THE LAST OF THE PERSECUTIONS¹§ I. EVENTS PRECEDING THE FINAL
PERSECUTIONS*The Hostility of Galerius*

THE period of understanding and harmony between the Church and the Empire which began in the reign of Gallienus and had continued under that of Diocletian once more came to an end. From 293 the Empire was governed by an Imperial Council of four. Diocletian had already in 286 co-opted as Augustus Maximian Hercules, who had been made Cæsar the preceding year; in 292 he had made two Cæsars, lieutenants and future successors of the two Augusti, Constantius Chlorus and Galerius. It was five years after this transformation of the imperial regime that the situation of Christians in the Empire began once more to be altered. The first manifestations of a change in the attitude of the imperial authorities took place on the morrow of the great victory obtained by Galerius over the Persians in 297 after a first reverse,² and may not have been

¹ Bibliography.—The same general bibliography as for chs. viii and ix. The special bibliography is for the most part contained in the notes to the present chapter. But see also: E. Stein, *Geschichte des spätromischen Reichs*, Vol. I (284-476); *Vom römischen zum byzantinischen Staate*, Vienna, 1928; G. Costa, *Diocleziano* (Profil, 50), Rome, 1920; *Diocleziano*, in the *Dizionario Epigraphico di antichità romane* of E. de Ruggiero, Rome, 1895; O. Hunziker, *Zur Regierung und Christenverfolgung des Kaisers Diocletianus und seiner Nachfolger*, Vol. II, 2nd part of *Untersuchungen zur römischen Kaisergeschichte* herausgegeben von Max Budinger, Leipzig, 1868; A. J. Mason, *The Persecution of Diocletian, A Historical Essay*, Cambridge, 1876; H. Florian, *Untersuchungen zur Diokletianischen Verfolgung*, Giessen, 1928, T. de Bacci-Venuti, *Dalla grande persecuzione al trionfo del Cristianesimo*, Milan, 1913; G. Pedrotti, *Storia di Costanzo Cloro*, Girgenti, 1904; L. Cantarelli, *Per so storia dell' imperatore Costanzo Cloro*, in *Atti della Pontificia Academia Romana di Archeologia, Memorie*, Vol. I, Part 1: *Miscellanea De Rossi*, Part I, Rome, 1923; R. Andreotti, *Costanzo Cloro*, in *Didaskalion*, 1930, fasc. 1, pp. 156 et seq.; F. Goerres, *Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Constantius*, in *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*, XXXI, 1888, p. 75; K. Bihlmeyer, *Der Toleranzedikt des Galerius*, in *Tübingerische Theologische Quartalschrift*, XCIV, 1912, pp. 411 et seq.; J. Maurice, *Numismatique constantinienne*, 2 vols., Paris, 1908 and 1911.

² There are martyrs sometimes attributed to the early years of the reign of Diocletian, but their date is in reality most uncertain.

unconnected with it. The situation of the Cæsar of the East was greatly improved by this resounding success. He was the better able to carry out his personal preferences, and these were certainly not favourable to the Christians. His mother was from across the Danube, according to Lactantius,³ who calls her a "mulier admodum superstitiosa," a zealous worshipper, if not a priestess of the deities of the mountains, "deorum montium cultrix." Galerius had inherited her fanaticism, and doubtless it was shared also by the majority of his army, the most important contingents of which had been provided by the Danubian peasants. Did his mother's influence, and the pressure of a body of officers desiring, perhaps both for the sake of advancement and because of Roman patriotism, to remove an element suspected of lukewarmness towards existing institutions, lead Galerius "to present himself to the pagan majority of the whole Empire and to military opinion as the champion of the official religion"?⁴ At any rate, the new measures against Christians seem to have begun with the return from the Persian expedition, or at least shortly afterwards. And very soon there was a systematic purge, the principal agent in which was a general officer, Veturius, the *Magister militum* of Galerius.⁵

The Christians and the Rite of "Adoration"

It has been suggested⁶ that the occasion of these measures was Diocletian's introduction of the rite of adoration into the court ceremonial, copied from the etiquette of the Persian Court. This meant that personages of a certain position, and officers above subaltern rank admitted to the imperial audience, before taking possession of their offices, had to "adore" the emperor. It is suggested that Christians refused to do so, and that accordingly proceedings were taken against them. But there is nothing in the actual facts which supports this notion:⁷ the "adoratio," the institution of which

³ *De mortibus persecutorum*, ix.

⁴ H. Gregoire, *La "conversion" de Constantin*, in *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, Vol. XXXVI, 1930-1931, p. 238.

⁵ Eusebius, *Chronicle*. The date indicated varies according to the MSS. from the 14th to the 17th year of Diocletian, i.e. from 298 to 301.

⁶ E. Babut, *L'adoration des empereurs et l'origine de la persécution de Diocletien*, in *Revue historique*, Vol. CCXIII, 1916, pp. 222 et seq.

⁷ Cf. H. Delehay, *La persécution dans l'armée sous Diocletien*, in *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres*, 1921, pp. 150 et seq.

is thus attributed to Diocletian,⁸ and which was called in Greek προσκύνησις, was only a genuflexion, which we find later on in use in the palaces of the Christian emperors. It is not possible to quote any authentic example of a Christian officer suffering for his refusal to submit to it.

The Purge of the Army

It was indeed because no more Christians were desired in the Army, where they were regarded as already too numerous, that the decisions were taken of which Veturius was the instrument. Eusebius tells us that "he left to Christian soldiers the choice of retaining their honours and grades by obeying the imperial orders, or if they refused, of being excluded from the army."⁹ Such exclusion involved for officers, who were especially aimed at, degradation from their rank, "gradus dejectio," and for ordinary soldiers, who, as we gather from *Passions* worthy of credence, were also affected by these severe measures, ignominious dismissal, "ignominiosa missio," with deprivation of the title and privileges of veterans.

Eusebius's account gives us to understand that many Christians were thus removed. In some places, through excessive zeal, attempts were made to compel soldiers ready to renounce their position to offer sacrifice, and in circumstances which are not known to us there were some executions; those of Pasirates and Valention, Hesychius, Marcianus and Nicander, and of the veteran Julius in Mœsia are vouched for by documents apparently reliable.¹⁰ All these martyrs belonged to the army of the Danube, placed under the authority of Galerius.

It is not surprising that Christians encountered there more numerous and more resolute opponents than elsewhere. But is it possible to believe that the military purge was confined to the troops of Galerius and was not general? The texts themselves do not enlighten us on this subject. But it seems impossible *a priori* that the

⁸ Moreover, a recent study by A. Alföldi (*Die Ausgestaltung des monarchischen Zeremoniellen am römischen Kaiserhofe*, in *Römische Mitteilungen*, Vol. LXIX, 1934, pp. 1 et seq.) has shown the somewhat legendary character of the early testimonies attributing to Diocletian a revolution of the Court ceremonial based on a systematic imitation of oriental monarchies.

⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, iv, 3.

¹⁰ Ruinart, *Acta martyrum sincera*, pp. 616 et seq. On this group of martyrs, cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, pp. 55-59.

Cæsar should have inaugurated a policy pregnant with consequences without the ratification of the Emperor which made it applicable to the whole Empire. On the other hand, the unquestionable ascendancy of Galerius which followed his Persian victory and was destined to increase, while the will power of Diocletian, an old and sick man, diminished, might explain an initiative which the latter may have allowed his Cæsar to take in his own forces without immediately making it also his own.

The Causes of the Persecution

It has indeed been urged ¹¹ that Diocletian's policy had been fundamentally anti-Christian from the first, and that the Emperor had delayed to declare himself only for lack of opportunity. According to this view, the antinomy between Church and Empire was practically self-evident for him, and only the necessity to take up first of all more urgent tasks involved in the external defence and internal reorganisation of the Empire led to the adjournment of an offensive which was nevertheless inevitable against Christianity as an ever more redoubtable spiritual enemy of the Roman State. Doubtless a few cases can be cited of military insubordination due to conscientious objections, denoting here and there a state of mind on the part of Christians rather unfavourable towards the Roman power, but these are of uncertain date. The conscript Maximilian ¹² and the centurion Marcellus ¹³ were put to death, the first at Theveste (Tebessa) for refusing to be enrolled, and the second at Tangiers for refusing to continue to serve, and perhaps also the veteran Tipasius, who may have been condemned by Maximian Hercules for refusing service when veterans were recalled for an expedition against the Moors. ¹⁴ But these were only isolated cases, and their refusals astonished their superiors. Even so, they would paradoxically but prematurely be in conformity with the desire of

¹¹ K. Stade, *Der Politiker Diokletian und die letzte grosse Christenverfolgung*, Inaugural-Dissertation der Universität Frankfurt-am-Main, Baden, 1926.

¹² *Acta Maximiliani* (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 309).

¹³ *Acta S. Marcelli centurionis* (ed. H. Delehaye), *Les Actes de saint Marcel le Centurion*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. XLI, 1923, pp. 257 et seq.

¹⁴ We have some hesitation in using the *Passion* of Tipasius, as it has so many legendary elements. Cf. P. Monceaux, *Etude critique sur la Passio Tipasii*, in *Revue Archéologique*, 4th series, Vol. IV, 1904, pp. 267 et seq. He regards as historically true the part we summarise above. The text of the *Passion* is in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. IX, 1890, pp. 116 et seq.

the Emperors to have no more Christians in the Army. We find also in Christian authors such as Commodian, Arnobius and Lactantius some apocalyptic ideas connected with the vision of a rather dark future for Rome, or otherwise calculated to offend Roman patriotism. But we must bear in mind that the date of Commodian remains uncertain, and that the diatribes of Lactantius against the pagan Empire were written only in the bitter days of persecution or in the exaltation of their glorious sequel.¹⁵ There is, in fine, no proof that Diocletian or his colleagues and counsellors had any serious occasion to take alarm because of a growing anti-Roman attitude during his reign. The peaceful description given by Eusebius of the first fifteen years of this reign give us a directly contrary impression.

Christianity and Manichæism

We know, indeed, that Diocletian was greatly worried about Manichæism, which he proscribed and condemned with extreme severity, and it is possible that he may have thought there was some connection between Manichæism and Christianity. The recent discoveries in Egypt of primitive Manichæan writings show plainly, though they have not yet all been published,¹⁶ that Manichæism did indeed present itself as a synthesis of Christianity, the religion of the West, and the Eastern religions of Iran and India. The Edict of Diocletian which attached severe penalties to Manichæism probably belongs to the year 296.¹⁷ The first symptoms of a new persecution against Christianity were manifested shortly afterwards.

¹⁵ The *De mortibus persecutorum* celebrates the Church's victory over the tyrants who tried to destroy her. The *Institutiones* are a philosophical treatise, written between 302 and 308. It is undeniable that we find there some passages very severe in regard to the Roman power, declarations concerning the incompatibility of military service with the profession of Christianity, and an affirmation that the Empire will one day leave Rome and return to Asia. But this political catastrophe is presented as the preliminary to the end of the world and the destruction of the universal order of which Rome was the guardian, while in the *De mortibus* we find the author constituting himself the champion of the Roman idea against the barbarian emperors.

¹⁶ C. Schmidt, *Neue Originalquellen des Manichäismus*, Stuttgart, 1933. Cf. also *supra*, p. 1009.

¹⁷ Edict *De maleficiis et Manichæis*, in Gregorian Code, XIV, 4. On the date, cf. Tillemont, *Histoire des Empereurs*, Vol. IV, p. 35, and A. Neander, *Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Religion und Kirche* (8 vols., Hamburg, 1825-1852), Vol. II, p. 195.

Even so, it was not possible to confuse the two religions, even by attributing to Christianity certain political or socially subversive tendencies which in reality were found only in individuals. Such a confusion in Diocletian's mind is difficult to reconcile with the benevolence which he in fact displayed towards Christians for so long. It is, of course, possible that he may have undergone a sudden change in their regard, caused by his equally sudden discovery of the danger of Manichæism. But in that case the brutal and general persecution ought to have broken out immediately, which it did not do.

Galerius the Chief Author of the Persecution

To sum up, the account of Lactantius, which makes Galerius the real beginner and the chief agent of the persecution, is very likely in conformity with the facts. Lactantius had long lived in Nicomedia, had taught the eldest son of Constantine and hence was obviously familiar with the imperial household, and in consequence may be regarded as a well-informed witness.

As, moreover, he was not very tenderly disposed towards Diocletian, why should he have accused Galerius especially, if the latter did not really play a very prominent part in starting the persecution? Again, the circumstances of Diocletian's abdication, which followed so soon afterwards, lead to the same conclusion. Lactantius has given a dramatic account of it, very obviously embroidered with imaginary details, in which the aged and wavering Diocletian is persuaded by Galerius to give the decision removing the power from himself. At least we gather that Galerius influenced the hesitating will of the Augustus, already inclined to surrender his power, in order to obtain, together with this surrender, the revocation of the original arrangements designating, as a new Cæsar and therefore one of his future successors, the young Constantine, son of Constantius Chlorus. The historic truth, so far as we can derive it from these various testimonies, seems to be that Diocletian became a persecutor and, contrary to all his previous policy, reintroduced religious warfare into the Empire, under the direct and preponderating influence of Galerius.

Even so, while Galerius may be justly regarded as the chief author of the persecution, he was not the only instigator of it. He once more declared war upon the Church, but this was because, at least in some

quarters in the Empire, the spirit of war had not been exorcised, or else had reawakened. The philosopher Porphyry about 270 or 280 had written a very virulent work against Christianity in fifteen books, *Κατὰ χριστιανῶν λόγος*.¹⁸ His disciple Hierocles, who was governor of Bithynia, was no better disposed towards Christians, and in 303 he addressed to them a pamphlet¹⁹ entitled *The Friend of the Truth*, which was probably not without its influence on Diocletian himself. Still another philosopher, whom Lactantius mentions without naming,²⁰ and whom he depicts as a veritable hypocrite, published a new diatribe about the same time. These two works were indeed published after the first persecuting measures, but they indicated a state of mind which had helped to provoke them.

The Occasion of the Persecution

In these conditions, there was needed only an occasion for the renewal of the struggle, which had nevertheless so many times failed to achieve the desired end. If we are to believe Lactantius,²¹ this occasion was an incident which occurred at Antioch in 302. When Diocletian had offered a sacrifice, and the entrails of the victims were being examined, the expected signs failed to appear. The head of the augurers, Tagis, thereupon declared that the Christians in the escort had upset the operations through making the sign of the Cross. Diocletian, alarmed and angry, began by commanding all the palace servants to offer sacrifice, under pain of flagellation. Then, led on by this first act and by superstitious fears, he personally adopted the policy which Galerius had already urged upon him. He sent to the heads of the forces of Asia, who depended directly upon himself, an order to put before the officers and men the choice between offering sacrifice or dismissal from the army.

¹⁸ The *Κατὰ χριστιανῶν λόγος* is lost. It has been partly reconstituted. Harnack has published the fragments this combined in the *Abhandlungen* of the Berlin Academy, 1916, under the title *Porphyryus "Gegen die Christen"* 15 *Bücher. Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referata*. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, Paris, 1934, pp. 223 *et seq.*, and Vol. III, p. 729.

¹⁹ The *φιλαληθείς*, the correct title of which should be *Λόγος φιλαληθείης*, *Friendly Discourse on the Truth*, was known to Lactantius, *Divinæ Institutiones*, v, 11, 12, and Eusebius, *Contra Hieroclen*. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 306 *et seq.*

²⁰ Lactantius, *Divinæ Institut.*, v, 2. Cf. P. de Labriolle, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-306.

²¹ *De mortibus persecutorum*, x.

It is possible that the military persecution was prevalent also in the army of Maximian Hercules. But no certain instance can be produced: the supposed massacre of a whole legion of soldiers said incidentally to have come from the East, the Thebeian Legion, in the Valais, is legendary.²² The *Acts of St. Sebastian*, the martyred Roman officer, although not possessing a much higher historical value, nevertheless authorise us to think that their subject, whose figure has been popularised by Art, was indeed an officer put to death at this time.²³

§ 2. THE GREAT PERSECUTION. THE EDICTS OF 303 AND 304, AND THEIR APPLICATION

The Decision to Persecute

Things rested there for the moment. But the crisis had arrived. Diocletian, returning to Nicomedia, was joined there by Galerius, who insisted upon war against Christians. Diocletian was still reluctant to shed their blood. A Council, to which were summoned some high officials, civil and military, and in which Hierocles who was present took a prominent part, declared against the Christians.¹ Diocletian wished to consult the oracles once more. He sent to Miletus to question the Didymean Apollo. The oracle, as might have been expected, confirmed the vote of the politicians.² The persecution was decided upon.

²² The existence of a very early cultus excludes any doubt as to the existence of these martyrs of Agaune. But we do not know their number, or whether they were soldiers. For a bibliography on this controverted matter, see *Histoire des Persécutions* by Paul Allard, Vol. IV, pp. 315 *et seq.* in the 2nd edn., and J. P. Kirsch, *Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 238, n. 4. Cf. also H. Delehayé, *L'origine du culte des martyrs*, 2nd edn., Brussels, 1933, p. 399.

²³ The existence of the Roman martyr Sebastian is beyond doubt. His *Acts* form part of an artificial compilation, which seems to have no connection with real history. Nevertheless there is no serious reason for rejecting the position of officer which they attribute to Sebastian, or the time of his martyrdom. Cf. A. Dufourcq, *Étude sur les Gesta martyrum romains*, Vol. I, Paris, 1900, pp. 186 *et seq.*

¹ Lactantius, *ibid.*, xi.

² *Ibid.* The *Life of Constantine* by Eusebius, parts of which call for caution, but which often gives his personal memories of the Emperor, states (II, 50, 51) that the oracle complained that upright men scattered through the world prevented him from foretelling the future. The resemblance of this detail with the incident of Antioch and the form of the reply may not inspire confidence, but they do not compel us to reject the story entirely.

But Diocletian continued to desire that it should not be a bloody one. An edict was prepared, affecting the buildings and sacred books, and various categories of Christians, but which would not inflict the penalty of death upon any. But without waiting for its publication, on the evening before (24th February 303) the police occupied the church at Nicomedia close to the imperial palace, sacked it, demolished it completely, and burnt the liturgical books.

The First Edict (303)

The Edict was published the following day: it ordered throughout the Empire the destruction of churches and of sacred books, and the deprivation of the faithful of the charges, dignities and privileges which they had possessed. It further deprived all of the right to plead in a court of justice in support of an accusation even of adultery, theft or injury; and lastly Christian slaves could no longer obtain their freedom.³

An exasperated Christian of Nicomedia tore down the edict, and was delivered to the flames.⁴ The incident had no further official consequences, but shortly afterwards there was a most opportune outbreak of fire in the imperial palace, which enabled Galerius, whom Lactantius accuses formally of causing the fire, to denounce the Christians as incendiaries.⁵ The palace servants were put to the torture, except those of Galerius, who were removed by their master. Nothing was found as a result. But a second fire broke out fifteen days after the first, and Galerius ostentatiously left Nicomedia, declaring that he did not wish to be burnt alive.⁶ Diocletian by now was beside himself with rage, and regarded as enemies all the Christians in the court and in the city, including his wife Prisca and his daughter Valeria, and presented them with the choice between death and abjuration. The two empresses, who may not yet

³ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, ii, 4. The last clause given by Eusebius is expressed thus: *τοὺς δὲ ἐν οἰκίαις . . . ἐλευθερίας στερεῖσθαι*. The current sense of *oikeria* was that of a domestic slavery. Some writers (cf. Paul Alard, *La persécution de Diocletien*, 2nd edn., Vol. I, p. 160) translate differently: "the people of common condition shall become slaves." But this interpretation seems an arbitrary one.

⁴ Lactantius, *De mort. persecut.*, xiii.

⁵ *Ibid.* Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VIII, ii, 6) speaks of a chance event. Constantine (*Oratio ad sanctorum cœtum*) attributes the event to lightning. Contemporary history has shown us that a fire which takes place at an opportune moment may be an ingenious way of overcoming political opponents.

⁶ Lactantius, *De mort. persecut.*, xiv.

have been formally Christians, defaulted; but there were numerous acts of heroism. Dorotheus, the Great Chamberlain, Peter, attendant of the bedchamber, and others perished in terrible torments.⁷ Bishop Anthimus and his clergy were executed, as well as numerous lay-folk, including women and children.⁸

Benign Application of the Edict in Gaul and Britain

The Edict was applied through the Empire, and though it did not immediately bring death upon the refractory, the degree of heroism displayed was by no means equal everywhere to that of the Christians of Nicomedia. In the lands placed under the direct authority of the Cæsar Constantius Chlorus, i.e. Gaul and Britain, the persecution was reduced to a minimum. Constantius Chlorus, like many of his contemporaries, was at least inclined himself towards Monotheism; his first wife, Helena, who was legally only a concubine, may have professed the Christian Faith or was approaching it,⁹ and in any case he showed himself to be in favour of toleration. Accordingly, he contented himself with destroying a few churches, in order to conform to the orders of Diocletian.¹⁰

Severity in the Rest of the Empire

Everywhere else there was much greater severity. In the provinces dependent upon Maximian Hercules, i.e. Italy, Spain and Africa, as in those governed by Galerius and Diocletian himself, the sacred books were destroyed in great numbers. In this way the library and pontifical archives of the Roman Church perished.¹¹ The same thing happened in many other places, and this explains why only a relatively small number of writings previous to the fourth century, and in particular of authentic *Acts* of martyrs of the various churches, have come down to us.

⁷ *Ibid.*, XV; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, vi.

⁸ Lactantius, *ibid.*

⁹ According to Theodoret, *Hist. eccles.*, I, 18, Constantine, thanks to his mother, grew up in an already Christian atmosphere. But Eusebius (*Vita Constantini*, III, 47), who was well informed on matters concerning the imperial household, asserts that Helena was converted to Christianity by Constantine. Possibly she had already been favourably disposed towards Christianity for some time, but did not explicitly adhere to it till later.

¹⁰ Lactantius, *ibid.*

¹¹ Cf. J. B. De Rossi, *La biblioteca della Sede apostolica*, in *Studi e documenti di Storia e Diritto*, 1884, pp. 34 et seq.

In many places, and notably in Africa, where the application of the Edict was at first especially severe, the cowardice of too many faithless possessors surrendered the artistic or literary treasures of their churches to the civil authorities. These "traditors" were bound to be in disgrace after the return of peace, and the problems which arose concerning them led to a schism, that of the Donatists, which afflicted the African Church for more than a century. But besides veritable "traditors" there were some wary men like Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, who replaced the sacred books in his basilica by heretical works, which were duly seized by the agents of the government.¹² There were also martyrs like Felix, Bishop of Thibica in Proconsular Africa, who was beheaded for refusing to surrender the Scriptures,¹³ or like a group of laymen in Numidia who were put to death for the same reason.¹⁴

The Second and Third Edicts (303)

While the edict of 303 was being strictly applied everywhere save in Gaul and Britain, some seditious movements troubled the East in the region of Melitene and in Syria. Diocletian naturally saw in these or was persuaded to see in them the work of Christians, and very soon afterwards two further general edicts were issued greatly strengthening the first.¹⁵ One of them ordered the imprisonment of the clergy; the other offered freedom to those who should agree to offer sacrifice, and condemned to torture those who should refuse. The prisons were filled, and the executions of clergy of all ranks began.

The Fourth Edict (304)

Was there a relaxation at the end of the year 303? Eusebius in his work on the Martyrs of Palestine says¹⁶ that on the occasion of his *vicennalia* or celebration of the twentieth year of his reign, on 17th September, Diocletian granted an amnesty, which opened the doors of the prisons. But could Christians profit by this while remaining in an attitude which legally was one of rebellion? That

¹² St. Augustine, *Breviculus collationis cum donatistis*, iii, 25.

¹³ *Acta sancti Felicis* (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, pp. 376-378).

¹⁴ St. Augustine, *Breviculus collationis*, iii, 25-27.

¹⁵ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, vi, 8-10.

¹⁶ Ch. ii.

is indeed doubtful. In any case if there was a momentary amelioration in the situation of ecclesiastics, it was of brief duration, and the general and pitiless persecution broke out again almost at once. Diocletian having fallen ill, Galerius became in fact almost the master of the Empire; a fourth edict was published in the Spring of 304; it renewed the desperate measures of Decius by extending to every Christian without distinction the obligation to offer sacrifice.¹⁷

This caused rivers of blood to flow. One single group of provinces, Gaul and Britain, continued to escape the horrors involved in the application of this ferocious law, thanks to the tolerant attitude of Constantius. The same was true from 305 in Spain, when, after the joint abdication of Diocletian and Maximian Hercules, Constantius became Augustus of the West and the Spanish provinces were placed under his immediate authority. But the Church meanwhile suffered there in many of its members.

The Persecution in Italy

Italy and Africa seem to have been less cruelly treated than the East and Illyricum after the abdication. The new Western Cæsar, Severus, who in theory was more particularly dependent on Constantius, does not seem to have been very zealous in the execution of the edicts. In any case, he had speedily to yield the imperial throne to the son of Maximian Hercules, Maxentius, who had overthrown him (Autumn of 306). Maxentius, whose interest it was to pacify the inhabitants of his domain, showed himself to be tolerant.¹⁸ The persecution thus raged in the Western provinces of the Empire only a little more than two years. But that was long enough to lead to a multitude of victims.

It is quite likely that we should include in the Diocletian persecution a great number of Roman martyrs of unknown date, and whose deaths are narrated in *Passions* of very doubtful credibility, but which agree for the most part in attributing the heroic deaths of their heroes to this supreme assault upon Christianity.¹⁹ These include SS. Mark and Marcellinus, St. Agnes,²⁰ Peter, and many

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, iii.

¹⁸ Cf. *infra*, p. 1201.

¹⁹ Cf. *Acta sanctorum*, under dates of their feasts.

²⁰ In spite of the legendary accounts underlying a Damasian inscription and which have popularised the figure of the young virgin veiled with her hair and

others. Pope Marcellinus died on 24th October 304,²¹ "through the persecution," according to Eusebius.²² But he is accused of a momentary weakness,²³ which may be confirmed by the absence of his name from the calendar of the *Depositio episcoporum*. Lucy,²⁴ the illustrious saint of Syracuse, and Cassian of Imola, where, if we are to believe the poet Prudentius,²⁵ he exercised his profession as a schoolmaster, would seem also to have been victims of the Diocletian persecution.

Martyrs in Africa, Spain and Rhætia

St. Afra, a converted courtesan, at Augusta Vindelicorum (Augsburg) in Rhætia;²⁶ Innocent at Milevis; Nivalis, Matrona, and Salvus at Calama (Guelma);²⁷ Digna at Rusicades (Philippeville);²⁸ Crispina, a matron, at Theveste (Tebessa)²⁹ in Numidia;

miraculously protected against all attempts on her honour, we know practically nothing more of Agnes besides the fact of her martyrdom and its approximate date, between the fourth edict and the abdication of Diocletian. Cf. *Acta SS., Januarii*, Vol. II, pp. 350 *et seq.*

²¹ *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, Vol. I, p. 6.

²² *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxxii, 1. Duchesne (*Histoire ancienne de l'Eglise*, Vol. II, pp. 93 *et seq.*) sees in this merely a simple chronological indication, but it seems rather difficult to translate *ὅν ὁ διωγμός κατείληφεν* otherwise than by "whom the persecution removed," i.e. by death.

²³ The note concerning him in the *Liber Pontificalis* and an apocryphal writing later than 500 (the *Acts* of a supposed Council of Sinuesse) say that he consented to offer incense to the gods. Possibly he merely gave up the sacred books. In any case the Donatists made much of his lapse, real or not. Cf. St. Augustine, *Contra litteras Petiliani*, ii, 202; *De unico baptisate*, xxvii. On this obscure question, besides Duchesne, *loc. cit.*, who does not accept the martyrdom of Marcellinus and says that "for a personage of such importance it was regrettable enough in such a time to die in his bed," see E. Caspar, *Kleine Beiträge zur älteren Papstgeschichte*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. XLVI, 1927, pp. 321 *et seq.* He likewise does not exclude the possibility of a lapse on the part of Marcellinus, followed by a rehabilitation. Cf. also by the same author, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, Vol. I, Tübingen, 1930, pp. 97 *et seq.*

²⁴ *Legendary Passion* in Surius, *Vitæ sanctorum* (7 vols., Cologne, 1576), Vol. VII, p. 247. On the feast of St. Lucy (13th December) substituted at Syracuse for the pagan feast in honour of *Tellus* or of the *Cereres*, cf. J. Carcopino, *Salluste, le culte des Cereres et les Numides*, in *Revue historique*, Vol. CLVIII, 1928, pp. 1 *et seq.*

²⁵ *Peri Stephanon*, ix.

²⁶ Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 50.

²⁷ Inscription published in the *Bullett. di archeol. cristiana*, Vol. XLV, 1876, pl. iii, no. 2.

²⁸ Inscription at Rusicades (Philippeville), *Corpus inscriptionum latinorum*, VIII, 1913.

²⁹ P. Monceaux, *Les actes de sainte Crispine, martyre à Theveste*, in *Mélanges Boissier*, Paris, 1903. The martyrdom of St. Crispina is also referred to in two

Justus and Securus at Sitifis (Setif);³⁰ Fabius, standard bearer of the governor's guard,³¹ in Mauretania; Maxima, Secunda and Donatilla at Thuburbo,³² forty-eight Christians of Abitene, with the priest Saturninus at their head;³³ some martyrs of unknown name revealed by an inscription recently discovered at Ammœdara (Haidra)³⁴ in Proconsular Africa; Vincent, a deacon of Cæsaraugusta (Saragossa), executed at Valentia before the promulgation of the fourth edict;³⁵ some anonymous Christians at Cæsaraugusta (Saragossa),³⁶ Felix at Gerona,³⁷ Cucufas at Barcinona (Barcelona),³⁸ Aciselus and Zoellus at Cordova,³⁹ Eulalia at Merida⁴⁰ in Spain—these are the best known names, but they give an inadequate idea of the part played by the provinces directly governed by Maximian Hercules in the martyrology of the Great Persecution. Peace returned after 305.

Martyrs in Illyricum

In the Illyrian provinces, and in Asia Minor, Syria, and the rest of the East as well as in Egypt, the fanaticism of Galerius and his Cæsar, Maximin Daia, who was his own nephew, equally bitter against the Christians, met with no obstacle. At that time there perished in the states of Galerius, to recall only the names mentioned in *Acts* worthy of credence, St. Philip, Bishop of Heraclea in Thrace, with Severus the priest and Hermes a deacon (22nd October); the three holy women of Thessalonica, Agape, Chionia and Irene (1st April); Montanus, priest at Singidunum in Mœsia

sermons of St. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Ps. 120* and *in Ps. 137*, preached on the occasion of the anniversary. Two other sermons, cclxxxvi, 2, and cccxlv, 5, and the *De sancta virginitate*, xlv (xlv), contain passages on this saint. The *Hieronymian Martyrology* erroneously puts her martyrdom at Thagora.

³⁰ Inscription published in *Bull. di arch. crist.*, Vol. XIII, 1875, p. 172.

³¹ *Passion* in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. IX, 1890, pp. 123 *et seq.*

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 110 *et seq.*

³³ Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 410.

³⁴ Cf. L. Poinssot, in *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des Travaux historiques*, 1934, Fev., p. xi. The inscription is devoted to the "glorissimis beatissimisque martyribus qui persecutionem Diocletiani et Maximiani divinis legibus passi sunt."

³⁵ Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 493.

³⁶ Prudentius, *Peri Stephanon*, iv, 57-58.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 8 *et seq.*

(26th March); Bishop Irenæus of Sirmium in Pannonia (6th April); the deacon Demetrius⁴¹ and five or seven consecrated virgins, in the same city (6th April); Pollio, the head of the lectors at Cibalæ in the same province; Bishop Quirinus of Siscia, also in Pannonia, the year of whose death is uncertain (5th June);⁴² Bishop Victorinus of Poetovio (2nd November), and Florianus, a layman, head of the chancellery of the governor at Lauriacum in Norica (4th May).⁴³ The martyrs of Salona in Dalmatia, Bishop Domnius, Asterius the priest, Septimius the deacon, Anastasius the fuller, with others whose position we do not know, Felix, Victorinus, Gaianus, Paulinianus, Antonianus and Telius may have suffered before Diocletian's abdication.⁴⁴ The *Hieronymian Martyrology* contains the names of many other witnesses to Christ attributed by it to the Danubian country and who very probably suffered in the last and "great" persecution.⁴⁵ Doubtless there were very many others whose names have been forgotten.

The Persecution in the Eastern Provinces

In Cilicia there perished amongst many others Tarachus, an old soldier; Probus, of plebeian origin, and also Andronicus, of higher

⁴¹ Known only by the *Syrian Martyrology* and the *Hieronymian Martyrology*. Some legendary *Passions* have transformed him into a military personage martyred at Thessalonica.

⁴² His *Passion* (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 549; *Acta Sanctorum*, Junii, I, pp. 380 *et seq.*) puts him under Diocletian and Maximian; the *Peristephanon* of Prudentius under Galenus; The *Chronicle* of Eusebius-Jerome in the year 308, which would correspond to the beginning of the reign of Licinius, under whom, however, the persecution died down, though perhaps not immediately. These statements, moreover, are not contradictory, for the persecution which began in 303 might be called that of Diocletian as long as it continued, and also Galerius was the head of the imperial college of which Licinius formed part.

⁴³ The *Passions* of these martyrs will be found in the *Acta Sanctorum* for the date indicated. Cf. also Bk. III, pp. 771-772.

⁴⁴ The *Chronicon Paschale* gives for the date of Domnius and Felix the seventh consulate of Diocletian and the sixth of Maximian, a date which is certainly inexact, for it would correspond to the year 299. But if we correct it to the ninth and eighth consulates, then we get the very plausible date of 303. On these martyrs of Salona, cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans la province romaine de Dalmatie*, Paris, 1906. On the military profession attributed to Gaianus, Paulinianus Antonianus and Telius, which probably arises from a confusion, cf. Bk. III, p. 772, n. 7.

⁴⁵ On all these martyrs, cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, pp. 61-120.

rank, united in the same martyrdom.⁴⁶ In Galatia, we have the seven virgins and the tavern keeper Theodotus at Ancyra;⁴⁷ and at Cæsarea in Cappadocia a widow named Julitta.⁴⁸ The magistrates of Pontus, according to Eusebius,⁴⁹ excelled themselves in discovering new means of torture. Numerous Christians of this province fled to the mountains. Others even crossed the frontiers of the Empire, to seek refuge in Armenia or even as far as Persia, where they were well received.⁵⁰ These forced emigrations were destined sometimes to be the starting point of new conversions in the lands outside the Empire.

Syria and Palestine, to the martyrs of which Eusebius of Cæsarea, an eye-witness, devoted a special work, likewise paid their tribute: Tyrannio, Bishop of Tyre, and Zenobius, a priest-doctor of Sidon, were beheaded at Antioch after being exposed in the amphitheatre;⁵¹ at Gaza Timothy was burnt and Agapius and Thecla thrown to wild beasts.⁵²

In Egypt

It was in Egypt, the "China" of the ancient world,⁵³ that the persecution seems to have reached its highest degree of cruelty.⁵⁴ Eusebius tells us that in Egypt "innumerable multitudes of the faithful, with their wives and children, suffered various kinds of death for the faith."⁵⁵ The persecution reached such a point that sometimes pagans were seized with pity and assisted Christians to escape the fate which threatened them. We have the explicit assurance of St. Athanasius on this point: ⁵⁶ "I heard our fathers say that when the

⁴⁶ Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 458.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

⁴⁸ St. Basil, *Homil.*, v, 1-2.

⁴⁹ *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xii, 6.

⁵⁰ Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini*, ii, 5, 3; St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio*, xliii, 5-8.

⁵¹ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, vii.

⁵² Eusebius, *Martyrs of Palestine*, lxxiii.

⁵³ Cf. F. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, 4th edn., Paris, 1929, p. 74, where this comparison is made. See also in G. Perrot and C. Chipiez, *Histoire de l'art dans l'antiquité*, Vol. III, Paris, 1911, p. 399, for an ingenious comparison between Naucratis, the Hellenic port of Egypt, and Hong-Kong.

⁵⁴ Eusebius, *Martyrs of Palestine*, lxxxi.

⁵⁵ *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, viii. In ch. ix, he adds that in the Thebaid the executions continued during whole years at the rate of ten, twenty, sixty or even a hundred a day.

⁵⁶ *Historia arianorum ad monachos*, lxiv.

persecutions began, some pagans concealed our Christian brethren from the search made by their enemies, even sacrificing their goods or going to prison rather than betray them: they welcomed those of our belief who took refuge with them, and exposed themselves to danger in order to protect them."

That a certain instinct of popular resistance to measures emanating from the central government may have thus led the natives of Egypt, who had not been romanised to any great extent, like the inhabitants of Northern Africa, to side with the victims, is quite feasible. But in spite of this, in face of the cruelty of the persecutors, we find the beginnings of an attitude of opposition on the part of the pagan population, combining a certain critical spirit with sentiments not only of ordinary humanity but perhaps also of esteem and interest in people whose goodness and charity they had already come to appreciate. Imperial policy had oscillated between severity towards a society regarded by it as dangerous for the State and toleration, if not benevolence, towards its members, whose high individual merits it had to admit. In the same way, public opinion, long hostile or at least mistrustful, and often contemptuous and scornful, sometimes had to confess the existence of virtues which it did not always understand, and this gradually led to sympathy.

§ 3. THE PERSECUTION AFTER DIOCLETIAN'S ABDICATION

Cessation of the Persecution in the West

Was it because they were at least obscurely conscious of this that, following the abdication of 305, some of the new emperors, without abrogating the existing edicts, did in fact stop the persecution or allow it to cease? In the case of Constantius, this was to be expected: as soon as Spain had been transferred from the authority of Maximian Hercules to his own, the severities ceased entirely. But Severus, although a creature of Galerius, brought about the same result in Italy and Africa: the Christians there had a respite, though not yet certain as to the future, for at Rome they did not venture to choose a successor for Pope Marcellinus, and the see remained vacant until 308. At that time Maxentius, son of Maximian Hercules, had seized power and, doubtless desiring to be supported by as many as

possible, he did not hesitate to adopt a favourable attitude towards Christians.¹ He was a man of the world, possibly rather sceptical in religious matters, and seems not to have been prejudiced against Christianity. Moreover, his own mother, Eutropia, became a Christian, though this may have happened only after the death of her husband Maximian Hercules and the victory of her son-in-law Constantine.²

The final defeat of Maxentius by Constantine and the character almost of a crusade attributed by later tradition to the campaign his fortunate rival fought against him³ made him seem to be, as it were, the incarnation of the dying pagan Empire in face of the Christian Empire founded by his conqueror. Eusebius regards him as a "tyrant";⁴ Constantine cancelled his acts,⁵ and his cruel despotism certainly made him rapidly unpopular. Nevertheless it remains true that Christians as such did not have reason to complain of him, and Eusebius expressly allows that he gave to his officers an order "to abstain from persecuting."⁶

True, on the occasion of the repressing of a rising by an African usurper, Alexander, the Christians, intentionally or otherwise confounded with the rebels, shared in the punishments. But even in regard to the African clergy, Maxentius knew how to show himself accommodating. Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, had courageously refused to give up a deacon accused of having written a defamatory libel against the prince. He was summoned to the Court, expecting the worst, but Maxentius accepted his defence, and sent him back a free man to his episcopal city. Mensurius, however, did not live to see this again, as he died on his way.⁷ In fine, apart from the bloody episode arising from Alexander's usurpation, we can say that severities ceased in Africa with the imperial abdication in 305, though not without leaving lasting traces, and the germs of new evils.

¹ On the policy of Maxentius towards Christians, cf. A. Pincherle, *La politica ecclesiastica di Massenzio*, in *Studi di filologia classica*, Nuove serie, VII, 1929, pp. 131 et seq. See also: E. Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, Tübingen, 1930, pp. 101 et seq., and *Kleine Beiträge zur älteren Papstgeschichte*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. XLV, 1927, pp. 321 et seq.

² Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, iii, 52.

³ See *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

⁴ *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xiv, 3.

⁵ On the *rescissio actorum* by Maxentius, cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

⁶ *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xiv, 1.

⁷ St. Optatus, *De schismate donatistarum*, i.

After-effects of the Persecution. Rise of the Donatist Schism in Africa

From the Spring of 305, bishops began to meet in order to appoint successors to those who had disappeared. In one of these meetings, held at Cirta under the presidency of the senior bishop of Numidia, Secundus of Tigisi, a pretext was found for instituting an enquiry into the conduct of the heads of churches during the critical times, and the atmosphere became full of suspicion in consequence. At Carthage, likewise, Mensurius was suspected of having been too clever⁸ by the confessors who themselves had to suffer in prison, who reproached him with not having helped them as he ought to have done. Mensurius died, and was replaced by his deacon Cæcilianus, who on his orders had sometimes moderated the excessive zeal of the faithful in regard to the confessors. A campaign, supported by numerous Numidian bishops more inclined to intransigence, including amongst others Donatus of Casæ Nigræ, was very soon started against the newly elected bishop, and he was accused of having been a *traditor*, and of receiving consecration from another real or supposed *traditor*, Felix of Aptonga. This was the beginning of the terrible Donatist schism,⁹ which so plainly revealed a centrifugal tendency carrying certain Christian groups outside Catholic unity, and some ethnic groups outside the imperial unity.

The Roman Schisms

The same causes led to similar effects in the Roman Church, though fortunately these were not so serious in character. But just as, after the Decian persecution, there had been African and Roman schisms for contrary reasons, that of Novatus at Carthage favouring laxity and that of Novatian in Rome rigorism, so that the disagreements in the two churches following the Diocletian persecution developed in opposite directions, though the situations were in fact reversed: the Roman dissidents were this time on the side of leniency. In 308 the Christian Community in Rome decided that the choice of a new Pope could no longer be deferred, and Marcellus

⁸ Cf. above, p. 1195.

⁹ On the beginnings of Donatism, cf. the report of the meeting at Cirta, read at the Conference of 411, III, 351-355, 387-400, 408-432, 452-470; St. Augustine, *Breviculus collationis*, III, 25-27, 31-33; *Adversus Cresconium*, III, 30; *Contra litteras Petilianæ*, I, 23; *De unico baptisate*, 29-31; *Ad Donatistas*, xviii; *Contra Gaudentium*, I, 47; *Epistolæ*, xliii, 3.

was elected.¹⁰ After so long an interregnum, Marcellus found much to do by way of reorganisation, and amongst other things he restored or raised the presbyteral "titles" in Rome to the number of twenty-four. But he found himself immediately faced with the problem of the *lapsi*, made more difficult still perhaps by the fact that the late Pope had himself failed to give an example of heroism, and his successor found it necessary to react accordingly.¹¹ In any case, there had been numerous apostates, and these now claimed readmission into the Church without doing penance. There was open discord between them and the faithful who were on the side of discipline: one day blood was shed, and the government of Maxentius, holding the new bishop responsible, condemned him to exile. He died in exile, and was replaced by Eusebius, whose arrival led to a renewal of disturbances. The election was not unanimous. The party who had opposed Marcellus wanted another candidate, Heraclius, and the divisions began again. There followed four months of agitations, which brought about a new intervention by the imperial authority. The two rivals were banished; Eusebius, interned in Sicily, died there shortly afterwards (310), and the see was left vacant for the moment. The Christian community of Rome provided itself with a new bishop, Miltiades, only in July 311, after the general return of peace to the Church.¹²

Rise of the Meletian Schism in Egypt

The Church of Egypt, as we remarked in connection with St. Peter of Alexandria, also had its internal crisis, for reasons of the same kind, and about the same time. As in the case of the Christian communities depending on Carthage, it was the intransigent faction which led to the outbreak of the conflict.¹³ The merciful measures of Peter towards the *lapsi* led to a protest by Bishop Meletius of

¹⁰ *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, I, p. 164.

¹¹ The only documentation we have on Roman matters connected with the persecution are the epitaphs of Marcellus and his successor Eusebius, written about half a century afterwards by Pope Damasus. Cf. De Rossi, *Inscriptiones christianæ Urbis Romæ*, II, pp. 62, 63, 138. Though these are not explicit, they give the impression that Marcellus was regarded as too strict by many of the Roman Christians, though he merely maintained the necessary penitential discipline. Cf. the work of Caspar mentioned above, p. 1202, n. 1.

¹² *Liber Pontificalis*, relevant references, and Damasian inscriptions mentioned in note 11.

¹³ Cf. *supra*, pp. 1047-1048.

Nicopolis in Upper Egypt. Not content with protesting against the conditions, which he declared to be not sufficiently severe, he tried to introduce disorganisation into the Egyptian Church, holding illicit ordinations in various centres, and even attempting to dispossess the Bishop of Alexandria of his authority by substituting for the vicars who secretly acted in his place during the persecution which soon recommenced, some creatures of his own. Meletius was excommunicated by Peter, arrested, and sent to the mines. When the persecution ended in 311, he returned, together with his partisans, equally hostile to their opponents, though many of the latter, with Peter at their head, had been martyred. Thus began the Meletian schism, as it is called, a new manifestation of the centrifugal tendencies then at work in the Church as in the Empire, which lasted until the middle of the fourth century.¹⁴

The Persecution in the East and in Illyricum

The persecution, after a relaxation which was perhaps a promise rather than a reality, had begun again in the States of Galerius (Illyricum and Asia Minor), and had increased in those of Maximin Daia (Syria and Egypt). We have no means of estimating its victims. But we are able to put in the year 306 or 307 the martyrdom at Sirmium on 22nd or 23rd February of an ordinary believer who lived on the produce of a garden where he led an eremitical life. His name was Sineros or Sinerotas; he had remained hidden during the early days of the persecution.¹⁵ In 306 apparently there perished also some who became famous under the name of the Four Crowned Saints, although in fact they were five in number. They were working sculptors employed in the quarries near Sirmium, where they executed various figures destined to decorate monuments. They appear to have been condemned for refusing to carve an Æsculapius at the commands of Diocletian, who had by then given up the throne

¹⁴ The sources concerning this schism are: (1) The *Canonical Epistle* of the Bishop St. Peter, with Syriac supplements edited by P. de Lagarde, in his *Reliquiæ juris ecclesiastici antiquissimæ*, Vienna, 1856, retranslated into Greek by E. Schwartz, *Zur Geschichte des Athanasius*, in *Nachrichten* of Göttingen, 1905, pp. 162 *et seq.*; (2) Some documents inserted at the end of the *Historia acephala* of St. Athanasius included in the collection called that of the deacon Theodosius, known through a manuscript of Verona (LX) republished by P. Batiffol, *La Synodicon d'Athanasie*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, Vol. X, 1901, pp. 128 *et seq.* Cf. *supra*, pp. 1047-1048.

¹⁵ Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 545.

and who, the year after his abdication, seems to have gone to Sirmium to superintend in person the carrying out of various works for the decoration of his palace at Salona, whither he had retired.¹⁶

The persecution died down in Illyricum, at any rate in the Western portion, after 307, when Licinius, named successor to Severus, had been established there by Galerius.¹⁷

As for Maximin Daia, still more fanatically anti-Christian, perhaps, than his uncle Galerius, Eusebius says that he published new edicts ordering the governors to compel all Christians to sacrifice.¹⁸ Numerous martyrdoms took place almost everywhere from Asia Minor to Egypt. Thus, at Alexandria, Philoromus, who had been a very high magistrate, *juridicus* or ἀρχιδικαστής, chief justice in the capital or for the rest of Egypt, was decapitated, together with the Bishop of Thmuis, Phileas, on the orders of the prefect.¹⁹ Many others perished also, sometimes with unusual refinements of cruelty.²⁰ At Gaza and at Cæsarea in Palestine there were many exe-

¹⁶ *Acta Sanctorum, Novembris*, Vol. III, pp. 748 *et seq.*, with valuable critical and historical studies by Père H. Delehaye. The *Passion* of the five Pannonian sculptors, which seems reliable, represents them as condemned by Diocletian himself, who moreover seems to have decided to do so with reluctance. It also mentions a Bishop of Antioch, Cynl, deported from his see to the quarries of Sirmium in 303, and who had been there for three years. In that case the martyrdom would have taken place in 306, and Diocletian's presence would be explained by the facts mentioned above. His abdication did not take away his power to have the law applied to Christians. N. Vulic (*Quelques observations sur la Passio Sanctorum Quattuor Coronatorum*, in *Rivista di Archeologia cristiana*, Vol. XI, 1934, pp. 156 *et seq.*) has recently criticised the topographical data of the *Passion*. Mgr. Kirsch (*Die Passio der heilige "Vier Gehronten" in Rom*, in *Historisches Jahrbuch*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1917, pp. 72 *et seq.*) passes a more severe judgment on the *Passio Sanctorum coronatorum*, and regards it as of no historical value. But that is an isolated opinion. On this subject, greatly complicated by the juxtaposition of two *Passions*, that of the five Pannonian sculptors and that of the Roman *Quattuor coronati*, cf. J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, pp. 88 *et seq.*, where a bibliography down to 1918 will be found.

¹⁷ But see above, p. 1199, the note concerning the martyrdom of St. Quirinus of Siscia, possibly put to death under Licinius. The *Passion* of SS. Hermylas and Stratonicus, martyrs at Singidunum (Belgrade) (cf. *Acta Sanctorum, Januarii*, Vol. I, p. 769), also puts their deaths under Licinius. But this attribution is not at all certain.

¹⁸ Eusebius, *De martyr. Pales.*, iv, 8. The Cæsars had only a mitigated legislative authority, and the edicts of 304 laid down nothing like the new orders mentioned by Eusebius. Accordingly, what happened probably was that Maximin sent instructions to the governors, after assuming power, commanding them to apply the laws in force without mercy.

¹⁹ *Acta SS. Phileæ et Philoromi* (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 548).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, VIII, viii and ix.

cutions; the most illustrious victim was the learned priest and doctor Pamphilus, the master and friend of Eusebius of Cæsarea. Many of the faithful of Cæsarea were condemned to the terrible work of the mines, after losing an eye.²¹

There was only a brief period in 308 when the violence of the persecution seemed to lessen in the Eastern countries. Maximin, unwilling to remain Cæsar seeing that Galerius had replaced Severus Augustus by his friend Licinius, doubtless manifested his irritation by an act of independence lessening the rigorous measures against the Christians.²² But they were soon resumed.

Galerius, who had been the real author of the persecution and who was obliged to admit himself vanquished by the peaceful resistance of the Christians, eventually had to make amends by declaring peace. Decius, in view of the spectacle of manifold apostasies, had, in spite of many contrary examples, been able to cherish the illusion of having dealt a death-blow at Christianity. Valerian, occupied by external troubles, had no time to judge the results of his own attempt. Galerius and Diocletian himself in his retreat had their defeat plainly before their eyes.

§ 4. END OF THE PERSECUTION. GALERIUS'S EDICT OF TOLERATION (311)

The Change in Galerius

The change was indeed so unexpected that Christians naturally saw the work of Almighty Providence in the circumstances, so tragic for the persecuting Emperor, which led him to inaugurate at the last a policy deliberately disavowing the one he had begun eight years before. Involved in the difficulties of a political situation which had transformed the tetrarchy of Diocletian into a veritable imperial anarchy, he began, at the commencement of the year 310, to suffer from a strange and fearful disease. In his avenging work, *On the Death of Persecutors*, Lactantius has described the horrible progress of this disease: ¹ incurable abscesses, hæmorrhages, gangrene, and

²¹ Eusebius, *De martyr. Pales.*, ix et seq.

²² This very brief period of calm is mentioned by Eusebius, *De martyr. Pales.*, ix, 1.

¹ *De mortibus persecutorum*, xxxiii. Cf. also Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xvi, 4, and the following pagan writers: Aurelius Victor, *De Cæsaribus*, xi, 9; *Epitome*, xl, 4, 5, Zosimus, *History*, ii, 11.

the invasion of the body by worms. The disease grew worse during eighteen months, at the end of which Galerius seems to have agreed with his victims, if not in regarding his misfortune as a divine punishment, at least in confessing that only their God could give him any solace. His mental sufferings, a combination of despair in presence of an incurable disease and a last hope of salvation, together with the realisation of political failure and the futility of so much bloodshed, resulted in the edict issued in April 311, a veritable charter of freedom for the Church, suddenly issued in the name of Galerius, Licinius and Constantine, and doubtless also in that of Maximin Daia,² although his name is absent from the text we possess. It was issued at Sardica, where Galerius then was, together with Licinius, himself already in favour of toleration, and who may perhaps have had much to do with its proclamation.³

The Edict of 311

It is a strange edict, which has the appearance of a compromise between two still antagonistic tendencies, and which, though decreeing toleration, begins almost like an edict of persecution, joining to the accusation that Christians had abandoned the religion of their forefathers the unexpected one that they had not even been faithful to their own. This was doubtless an allusion to the heresies which had divided the Church: "Amongst all the measures we have constantly taken for the good and utility of the State," says this disconcerting text,⁴ "we have hitherto tried to bring back all things to the ancient laws and to the traditional discipline of the Romans, and in particular to ensure that the Christians, who had abandoned

² The name of Maximin Daia is absent in the text which has come down to us, because the memory of this emperor was subsequently abolished officially. Similarly the name of Licinius, which appeared in the first edition of Eusebius, disappeared in the last edition, by reason of the rupture between him and Constantine, which after his defeat involved the legal destruction of anything that might recall his memory.

³ H. Gregoire (*La "conversion" de Constantin*, in *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, Vol. XXXVI, 1930-1931, pp. 231 et seq.) makes Licinius the real author of the edict of toleration. His policy in the years which followed would seem to justify this hypothesis without, however, giving it more than a fairly high degree of probability.

⁴ Text in Lactantius, *De mort. persecutorum*, xxxiv; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xvii. Lactantius has conserved the original Latin text, without the imperial heading, which is known only in the Greek translation of Eusebius, in the two forms indicated above.

the religion of their fathers, should return to better ways. But such was their evil will and their folly that they did not even keep to the ancient customs instituted by their first founders, but made for themselves laws according to their caprices, and held various assemblies in various places. Finally, after we had ordered that everyone should return to the ancient customs, many obeyed through fear, and many were also punished. But as the majority persevered in their obstinacy, and we realised that on the one hand they were not giving to the gods the worship and honour due to them, and on the other hand were not adoring the god of the Christians"—an evident allusion to the compulsory abandonment of religious assemblies—"in virtue of our extreme clemency and our ordinary custom to deal gently with all men, we have decided to extend our indulgence even to them, and to allow henceforth that Christians should exist and restore their assemblies, provided they do nothing against discipline. In another letter we shall communicate to the magistrates the rules they are to follow. In return for our indulgence, Christians ought to pray to their God for our welfare, for that of the State, and for themselves, so that the Commonwealth may enjoy a perfect prosperity and that they may be able to live securely in their habitations."

This was an admission of failure: the Emperor confessed that he had not been able to overcome the passive resistance of the Christians. He yielded and the "*licet esse christianos*" was proclaimed in a manner that was to be definitive. The restoration of the right of assembly was joined to the recognition of liberty of conscience and of worship, to use modern terms. It involved the return to the Church of ecclesiastical property not yet alienated, for the authorisation to hold religious assemblies implied the restitution of confiscated places of worship; the "*conventicula*" mentioned in the edict comprise both the assemblies themselves and the places where they took place. The restitutions, certified by texts, made by Maxentius in Italy⁵ leave no room for doubt concerning the initiative of Galerius, or more exactly of the imperial college of which he was the head, in this matter. The reservation, "provided they do nothing against discipline," was quite natural, and even obligatory on the part of him who represented the State, and the announcement of a further communication destined to guide the magistrates in applying the edict might, moreover, open the door to irksome restrictions.

⁵ Cf. *infra*, p. 1210.

The Emperor Maximin Daia, in particular, who was not himself inclined to cease the fight against Christians, found in it a weapon which he knew how to employ.⁶

In point of fact it seems that the detailed measures announced by the emperors were not promulgated. At any rate, we have no positive indication that Galerius really published the rescript for the magistrates announced in his edict. Doubtless he died too soon, for his life came to an end on 5th May 311.

Maximin Daia Continues Hostilities in the East

Did his death encourage Maximin Daia to carry on a particular policy to which he was already inclined? Certainly the cessation of the persecution was not general after the edict of Galerius. It is more than likely that, although Maximin's name does not appear in the text we possess,⁷ he had officially signed the edict with his colleagues, who were always understood to legislate collectively. But whereas the edict was posted up in all the provinces depending on Galerius, Licinius and Constantine—and again, in the Italian and African domain of Maxentius, who did not want to do less in regard to Christians than the imperial college which regarded him as an intruder, the places of worship hitherto remaining in the hands of the authorities were given back to the Christians⁸—Maximin Daia in his own provinces did not publish the edict. His Prætorian Prefect Sabinus merely informed the provincial governors of it, on his orders,⁹ charging them to let the city magistrates know that the Emperors had given up the idea of bringing back Christians to the State religion, and that these were no longer to be persecuted for this reason. Thereupon the prisons were opened, and Christian worship began to be celebrated once more, especially in the cemeteries on the tombs of the martyrs. But in the case of the Eastern provinces, and not only Syria and Egypt but also Asia Minor, where Daia had, following the death of Galerius, increased his portion at the expense of Licinius, this relaxation was once again only a mo-

⁶ The significance of the Edict of Galerius has been well brought out in a work by J. B. Knipping, *The Edict of Galerius (A.D. 311) Reconsidered*, in *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 1922, p. 693.

⁷ Cf. *supra*, p. 1208, n. 2.

⁸ Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

⁹ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, i, 3-6, gives the text in Greek, translated from the Latin original.

mentary one. The death of Galerius, coming so soon after the publication of his edict, freed Maximin from all control, and he did not hesitate gradually to renew the religious war. Moreover, this was accompanied by an external war, itself resulting from the hostility of the emperor towards Christianity. Apparently he wished to compel the Armenians, friends and allies of the Empire who had become Christians, to return to paganism. They rebelled, and Maximin Daia did not succeed in overcoming them.¹⁰ Inside his provinces, the anti-Christian campaign took very varying forms, including an attempt to establish a kind of pagan opposition-Church, in which the priesthoods were organised hierarchically according to cities and provinces as in the case of the Christian Church,¹¹ while those holding such offices were in fact personages prominent in the civil hierarchy, endowed with external powers calculated to increase their prestige, and armed with powers to proceed against the Christians.¹² Again, we find a diffusion of supposed *Acts of Pilate*, insulting Christ;¹³ the encouragement of cities still dominated by pagans to ask for the expulsion of Christians, of whom a number, difficult to estimate but certainly not insignificant, were reduced to wander about in the country districts;¹⁴ manifold vexations, and lastly new executions. It was indeed a renewal of hostilities, and there perished amongst others Bishops Sylvanus of Emesa and Peter of Alexandria,¹⁵ other Egyptian bishops, and the famous priest-theologian Lucian of Antioch. Hostilities continued intermittently until Daia

¹⁰ This war is known to us only through Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, viii, 2, 4. Possibly we should identify these Armenians with the inhabitants of five satrapies across the Tigris, added to the Empire after the victory of Galerius in 297, but which remained under the rule of national leaders, who had become Christians, with the reigning dynasty and a great part of the population of the kingdom of Armenia.

¹¹ Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, xxxvi and xxxvii; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xiv, 2; Julian, *Epist.*, v, 16; St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Orat.*, iv, 111; Sozomen, *Hist. eccles.*, V, xvi.

¹² Lactantius, *ibid.*, xxxvii; Eusebius, *ibid.*, VIII, xiv, 9 and IX, iv, 2. Cf. H. Gregoire, *Notes Epigraphiques, I: La religion de Maximin Daia*, in *Byzantion*, Vol. VIII, 1933, pp. 49 et seq.

¹³ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, v, 1. On the spurious *Acts of Pilate*, see a short but excellent summary in P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, pp. 327-328.

¹⁴ Some well-known texts, such as the Aricanda inscription (*Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*, III, 12132), have given examples of these petitions from cities wishing to please the prince by bringing about the expulsion of a Christian population with which they no longer desired to have any contact. In view of modern events, no one can say that such compulsory evacuations were impossible or improbable.

¹⁵ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, vi; cf. VIII, xiii.

yielded when summoned by Constantine in 312.¹⁶ Then, having quarrelled with Licinius, ally of Constantine, who himself had conquered Maxentius, Maximin was finally eliminated in 318.¹⁷

Final Peace

The *entente* between these two emperors, Licinius and Constantine, resulted, after their meeting at Milan in 312, in the establishing of new relations between the Church and the Empire, more favourable to the former than the Edict of Galerius, and which has long been called, not correctly from the historical point of view¹⁸ though not without reason nevertheless, the Edict of Milan. The new state of things defined by this phrase marks the final stage in a transformation which came about in consequence of the conversion to Christianity of Constantine, the prince, who had then become the real head of the imperial college and was later to become the sole emperor. This "conversion" of Constantine, which has been the subject of much discussion as to its date, its sincerity, and even its reality, inaugurates a new period in the external history of the Church, the beginnings of which, i.e. the exact circumstances and character of this conversion, will be considered in another work.¹⁹ But what already closed the former period, that of the persecutions, in spite of the prolongation of the war against Christianity by Maximin Daia, was the Edict of Galerius. From that day the Empire, morally vanquished in the religious sphere, recognised the right of Christians to exist and to practise their religion, and this right will henceforward be no longer contested, at least openly.

¹⁶ On the rescript addressed at that time by Maximin to his prefect Sabinus, and proclaiming toleration, though without conviction (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, x, 9), cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁸ Cf. *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire*.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I.

THE EXTENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CONQUEST ON THE EVE OF THE PEACE OF CONSTANTINE

THE long struggle in which the Roman Empire had been engaged against the Christians ended in the victory of the latter. This does not mean that they had already conquered the whole Roman Empire by reason of their numbers. But the dynamic power which was behind them had overcome all obstacles. The future was theirs, and their uninterrupted march of conquest bade fair to go beyond even the rich promise of that time, just as in space it had gone beyond the frontiers of the Empire. For about the year 310 Christianity had already extended its progress beyond the Roman lands, in Africa, amongst the Goths of the country beyond the Danube, in Armenia, Persia, and even as far as the Indies.

§ I. STATE OF THE CHRISTIAN CONQUEST. ITS EXTENT AND ITS LIMITS

Christianisation of the East

From the standpoint of numbers, the situation of Christianity in the Empire differed much according to the various regions. It constituted a majority,¹ or almost a majority, at least in the cities in some parts of the East, and an imposing minority in others. On the other hand, in some great cities where the old religions still had numerous and earnest believers, as at Antioch for example, Christians encountered energetic resistance, and the partial success of the policy of Daia, inviting requests for the expulsion of Christians from their pagan fellow-citizens, testifies to the continued existence of these civic strongholds of Eastern paganism.

Nevertheless, on the whole it is certain that by 300 the Christianisation of the East had gone very far. It had made more progress in Hellenic or hellenised parts like Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia

¹ Eusebius (*Hist. eccles.*, VIII, xi) mentions a small town in Phrygia which had become entirely Christian with all its rulers.

and the Greek coasts, than in Egypt and especially the Semitic countries such as Syria.

Weaker Diffusion of Christianity in the West

There was a much weaker diffusion of Christianity in the West. But it would be an exaggeration to say that, apart from the Mediterranean shores, the West was scarcely affected.² In Spain, authentic data concerning the Valerian Persecution and the large number of sees represented at the Council of Elvira prove an already deep penetration of the interior of the country by Christianity. Though the number of bishoprics in Gaul prior to the fourth century was rather limited, there were a few in existence some distance away from the Mediterranean shores, e.g. at Bordeaux, Bourges, Sens, Paris, Rouen, Soissons, Rheims, Châlons, and Trèves. In Italy, it is hardly likely that Maxentius would have carried out from the first a policy favourable to the Christians if they had only been a mere handful of men. In Africa, we have noticed the great number of bishops assembling in a series of councils held under the presidency of the Bishop of Carthage from the end of the second century until the close of the last persecution; the after effects of this on the whole life of the provinces, which was to be profoundly upset by Donatism, show the place held by the Christian element in these countries. Even so, it remains true that there was still much to be done to propagate the Gospel in the West, where country districts had hardly been touched, while in the Asiatic and Hellenic East, as well as in Egypt, Christian communities in villages were no longer an exception.

Evangelisation of the Country Districts Begins in the East

We must not forget that, already in the first years of the second century, Pliny the Younger expressed his alarm, doubtless exaggerating somewhat, at the success of Christian propaganda in the little hamlets of Bithynia. Two and a half centuries later we get a very paradoxical position. According to Theodoret,³ the Mesopotamian town of Kaskar remained obstinately pagan, while the neigh-

² Such is the thesis of H. Gregoire, *La "conversion" de Constantin*, in *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, Vol. XXXVI, 1930-1931, pp. 231 et seq.

³ *Hist. eccles.*, IV, xviii.

bouring country, according to the *Acta disputationis sancti Archelai cum Manete hæretico* ⁴ and the *Peregrinatio Aetheriæ*,⁵ was full of monasteries and hermitages, and peopled by Christians.

It Was Still Very Weak in the West

We hear of nothing similar in the West. But we must note that St. Irenæus in one place complains that he is forgetting Greek among the Celts,⁶ which implies that he often addressed himself to the "rustici." But we read nothing like this in St. Cyprian for instance, and we should perhaps find it difficult to produce other testimonies to a similar preaching of the Gospel in native tongues, such as the Iberian language and Punic, as also to discover precise traces of recruitment of clergy from the non-Roman elements of the African, Hispanic, Gallic or Illyrian populations. But it would probably be going too far to base an entirely negative conclusion on this.

Christianity the Religion of Humble Folk

On the other hand, we know well that Christianity was in great measure the religion of the humble, and was regarded as such. "I do not address myself," wrote Tertullian in his *De testimonio animæ*,⁷ "to those who have been trained in the schools, or in the libraries. . . . It is to you I speak, you, O simple and ignorant souls, who have learnt only what one picks up in the streets or in taverns." Celsus had said previously, putting the words in the mouths of Christians with an obvious hostility: "If there is anywhere a clodhopper, a fool, or a nonentity, let him come to us with confidence." And Origen, replying to him, found no difficulty in allowing that Christianity found the majority of its believers among "the weavers, the fullers, and shoemakers,"⁸ or, as St. Jerome will say a hundred and fifty years later, "from the midst of the lowest people."⁹

⁴ Migne, P.G., Vol. X, 1492 *et seq.* The detail retains its value even if the *Acta* are only a fiction.

⁵ *Sanctæ Sylvie peregrinatio*, xxx, in *Itinera Hierosolymitana*, ed. Geyer in *Vienna Corpus*, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 35 *et seq.* (This deals with ancient itineraries of pilgrimages.)

⁶ *Adversus Hæreses*, I, Prefatio.

⁷ *De testimonio animæ*, i.

⁸ *Contra Celsum*, III, lv.

⁹ "Ecclesia Christi non de Academia et Lyceo, sed de vili plebecula congregata est" (St. Jerome, *Commentarium in Epistolam ad Galatas*, I, III, ad cap v, vers.

It Also Gained Numerous Recruits from Those in Higher Society

But we must never lose sight of the conquests made quite early among the members of the intellectual or social aristocracy, such as Dionysius the Areopagite at Athens, the Proconsul Sergius converted by St. Paul, and the members of several senatorial families and even of the imperial families in Rome.¹⁰ At the end of the second and in the course of the third century, the conversion of a growing part of the *élite* towards Christianity continued. Tertullian spoke of "clarissimi" ¹¹ as Christians; good provincial families provided officers of the Church like Gregory Thaumaturgus, Bishop of Neocæsarea in Pontus, intended at first for the bar, and brother-in-law of an Assessor of Judea, or like Cyprian of Carthage, who came from a family of decurions, and was a well-known advocate in his city. St. Perpetua, who was martyred there, had a right to the title of "matron." We have seen that in Asia Minor and Spain many Christians were members of the *curiæ*.¹² It seems indeed, from the rosy picture painted by Eusebius of the last years of the third century, that there was still greater progress: the Court itself, already once half Christian under Alexander Severus, and the magistracies were full of Christians.

§ 2. THE ULTIMATE REASONS FOR THE RESISTANCE TO CHRISTIANITY

The Alleged Incompatibility between Christianity and Rome

The progressive conquest by Christianity and its acceleration during certain favourable periods doubtless led to the main attempts at resistance, and sudden and violent attacks in the form of the three general persecutions under Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian and his colleagues. What were the fundamental causes of this effort, succeeding others less systematic and less severe, made in order to put a stop to the rising tide of Christianity and to hurl it back once for all? We have already mentioned them. They may be summed up in the conviction that Christianity was incompatible with the Roman idea. Christians, who would not adore the gods of the Em-

¹⁰ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 382-384, and Bk. III, pp. 761 *et seq.*, 800-801, 809, and *supra*, p. 1155.

¹¹ This is the official term used of members of senatorial families. Cf. Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*, v.

¹² Cf. *supra*, p. 1155.

pire, beginning with its divine emperor, were accused of disloyalty. Whether they were accused in the course of the two and a half centuries separating Nero and Constantine, of *odium generis humani*, to use the expression of Tacitus,¹ or of atheism, it was always their lack of interest in the destiny of their earthly fatherland that was urged against them, either implicitly or explicitly.

We have discussed both the motives and the injustice of such a judgment. Neither in the matter of military service, nor in regard to public functions, was there in practice any general and premeditated refusal by Christians to take part in the life of the State. It was only the close union between the religious and public life of the city of that time that constituted an obstacle to a more complete manifestation of a civic spirit which the instructions of the apostles Peter and Paul on duties towards Authority, and their inculcation of obedience, wholehearted respect and cordial good will, and the Roman sentiments of a man like Clement, showed beyond doubt to have been present in the first generation of Christians. Neither the possibly less favourable tendencies on the part of a certain number of Christians of that generation, hypnotised by the expectation of the *Parousia*, nor the dreams of a few Millenarianists of the following century, obsessed by the idea of great cataclysms in which the Empire and its worldly power would collapse, nor the secessionist² spirit of Tertullian, who nevertheless prayed for the Empire,³ nor the philosophical scruples of Origen as to the use of force against an enemy, nor the anger of Lactantius, exasperated by the atrocities of the persecution, should mislead us. All these do not alter the facts, and in particular, that of the presence of Christians in the courts, in the army, and in the magistracies, when this was not made impossible for them. And moreover, the ecclesiastical magisterium, whose good sense condemned voluntary or provoked martyrdom, did not adopt or explicitly defend the objectionable ideas referred to, though it is obvious that the Church would have been accused of doing so if she had really regarded men like Tertullian as the most authentic interpreters of her doctrine. The opinion which regards Christianity as one of the most active solvents urging the Roman Empire towards its end seems difficult to establish, to say the least.

¹ Cf. Bk. II, pp. 371-373.

² Cf. *supra*, p. 1156.

³ *Apologeticum*, xxxiii.

Nevertheless, we will not deny the long antagonism between Church and State. But this was maintained or only too frequently renewed precisely by the repeated persecutions. When these definitely ceased, the Christians in the Empire had no further reason to regard themselves as other than true Romans: the State, by frankly recognising at last their right to existence, admitted their share in responsibility for the public good, which, moreover, their private virtues disposed them to serve faithfully, and thus they definitely rallied to the terrestrial city which had hitherto shown them only a hostile countenance. St. Ambrose in the fourth century will be a type of these truly Roman Christians. But during two centuries a long and cruel misunderstanding, due to old conceptions, maintained on both sides the idea of the incompatibility between the Church and the Empire.

Real Opposition between the Christian Spirit and that of Antiquity

It is only too clear, moreover, that the Christian outlook could not altogether coincide with that of Antiquity, even when this was purified from a number of prejudices. It was indeed precisely a difference in spirit which, in the eyes of Authority and of Roman opinion, in cultivated society as well as in plebeian circles, caused Christians to be regarded with mistrust. However respectful they may have been towards the laws, however obedient to the emperor, loyal towards the Empire, and devoted to the common good, they did not and could not belong wholly to the earthly fatherland, and did not put this "above everything else." They looked beyond the frontiers of space and time. Hence a certain lack of interest in the course of the things of this world, which was a subject of reproach, as involving less apparent zeal for the defence of Roman territory and *a fortiori* for its extension. But to these defects of a temporal nature there was a twofold counterpart, as is shown by the history of Christianity in the first ages of the Empire.

§ 3. CHRISTIANS AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

Christians Serving the Public Good by their Special Virtues

Less occupied than others by the affairs of this world, and indifferent to death, even when they did not desire it to come quickly

as the gate of the new life which would consummate their union with Christ, Christians provided manifold examples of virtues previously very rare, and of new kinds of heroism: contempt for riches, purity of morals (the safeguard for the future of the race),¹ charity without measure, acceptance of suffering and death rather than the renunciation of the highest of ideals, and faith in a God of love. Could such a number of manifestations of individual excellence during centuries, such efforts, so many sacrifices, and such courage, often superhuman, fail to do as much or more for the good of the State and the progress of the world as even the most sincere and active conformity, as inculcated by traditional patriotism? When the apologists asked the emperors for peace for Christians, whose devoted service they offered to them, they were not offering something which was of no value.²

Christianity the Ally of Roman Civilisation

Less concerned, perhaps, with the material protection of this Empire, to which their desires were not confined, and which a certain number of them thought they ought not to serve by arms, being pacific in mind and inclined to pacifism, Christians regarded the world beyond the Roman frontiers with somewhat different sentiments from those of the mass of their fellow-citizens. But their sentiments did not run counter to the true interests of the Roman idea in trying to realise the Christian ideal—quite the contrary.

Historians have pointed out the lack of curiosity in ancient peoples for things not included in their normal daily life. "The horizon of peoples of classical antiquity," wrote E. Albertini recently in his *History of the Roman Empire*,³ "was voluntarily limited; they deliberately left outside their influence and even outside their knowledge, great portions of humanity. The Romans persisted in this attitude after the Christian era, in spite of the extension of their Empire, and in spite of the contacts with new nations which this

¹ "The activity of Christianity did not only spread the idea of human brotherhood; another great benefit it conferred was the affirmation of a sexual morality which had been decidedly lacking in the Greco-Latin world. Its precepts assured fruitful unions. During fourteen centuries, the restriction of births will be more or less abolished" (A. Landry, *Quelques aperçus concernant la dépopulation dans l'antiquité gréco-romaine*, pp. 20-21, in *Revue historique*, Vol. CLXXVII, 1936, pp. 133).

² Cf. Bk. II, pp. 534-535.

³ Ch. xi, p. 27.

extension involved. They made no effort to complete and co-ordinate the information they acquired through the action of circumstances. The emperors aimed at nothing more than having a good guard on the frontiers, and regulating the admission of barbarians into the Empire by fixing the numbers to be allowed and the places and times of entry. They did not try to take a longer view."

But the outlook of Christians was larger, more generous, and richer in promise for the future. Curiosity, and still more a care for the world beyond the frontiers: these characteristics Christians possessed from the first, because, from the beginning and ever afterwards, the "missionary" spirit was active in the Church, and this led its children, precisely because of the words of Christ, to labour at converting "all nations," for the well-being of all mankind. Doubtless geographical ignorance, which they possessed in common with their contemporaries, led them to think that already their first generation had reached the extremities of the earth. But even so we should not attribute too much importance to the passage in St. Paul in which we find a statement of this kind,⁴ which is, moreover, only a quotation from a psalm.⁵ We may allow that, having reached Spain, and thinking perhaps that equally enterprising pioneers had accomplished a similar task in other directions, the apostle may have said rhetorically that the Christian conquest was nearing its end, but certainly the following generations must have understood very soon that there was far more yet to do. The second and third centuries saw the evangelisation of the Empire in all its provinces. But in addition, its frontiers had already been crossed by successors of the Apostles. Persia, which was not a barbarian country but the seat of one of the most ancient civilisations in the world, may have been reached already in the Apostolic age, and in any case it possessed churches already by the third century, and we have seen that other far off lands heard the preaching of Christianity in the course of the same period.

Those who thus made it heard were not missionaries from Rome. But they came from the Empire, and whether they willed it or not, they represented Roman civilisation, and their spiritual conquests would have been of service to Rome, at least morally, if Rome had then paid attention to them, as she would begin to do with Constantine and his sons, and as Byzantium would do still more in the

⁴ *Rom.* x, 18.

⁵ *Ps.* xviii, 5.

time of Justinian. In this way Christian "pacifism," if such existed, was if not a servant, at least an ally of ancient civilisation.

Christianity Goes beyond the Roman Empire

Certainly the preachers of the Christian religion had undertaken a much higher mission. Yet we may stress the very great historical interest of the fact that, whereas about the year 300 the Roman Empire kept itself within its boundaries, incidentally immense in extent, and which had been given a last advance through the victorious war of 297 putting them beyond the Tigris, the Kingdom of Christ already overflowed these limits on almost every side. It may have begun to overflow the imperial *limes* in Britain,⁶ as in Northern Africa, and in any case it was across the Danube, in the midst of the land of the Goths, and in Armenia, from whence it will almost immediately reach Caucasian Georgia. It was also in Persia, and had reached as far as the Indies, or at least as far as their gates, and it was in Arabia and the coast of Abyssinia. It occupied practically the Empire of Alexander joined to that of Cæsar, and also some places still further away. At the same time we must bear in mind that, except in Armenia, and in Persia to an extent which it is difficult to estimate, in all these distant countries there were as yet only small and isolated Christian communities.

§ 4. CHRISTIANITY OVERCOMES RESISTANCE AND OBSTACLES

Rapid Diffusion of Christianity

The great Christian conquest which came about between the reign of Tiberius and that of Constantine was that of the Roman Empire, even though the task was not complete and, as we have seen, the degree of success varied according to the region. Vast though the space covered was, it had required only a relatively short space of time to accomplish this. Though never interrupted, the movement seems to have been accelerated or amplified at certain times, so that we can discern its chief stages.

Already at the end of the first century, the word of the Apostles

⁶ Cf. Bk. III, pp. 778-779.

and their immediate successors had announced the coming of Christ in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia and in Greece, on the confines of Illyria, in Italy, almost certainly in Spain, very probably in Egypt and probably also along the southern coasts of Gaul and in the province of Africa. The second century had witnessed fresh progress: the church of Lyons and the church of Carthage appear in history, and those of the great cities of Northern Italy like Milan and Ravenna go back to that time or one just after it; and in the same period the Christian faith penetrated to the interior of the Asiatic provinces. But it was in the third century that we find the second phase of the wide diffusion of Christianity: the Eastern half of the Empire seems by then to have been completely evangelised¹ and already in great part won for the new faith. In the West, Christian communities were multiplied in Italy and Africa; many others are also mentioned in Spain, and the evangelisation of Gaul was relatively advanced; the Faith reached the Rhine and crossed the Channel, while numerous Christian centres also manifested themselves along the Danube and in the neighbouring countries.

All this had taken place in about two and a half centuries. It was neither an instantaneous revolution, nor a slow progress, but a rapid and continuous growth, though not a uniform one, and at the end the most profound transformation the ancient world ever underwent was virtually complete. The victory had been obtained at the price of very many sacrifices, but its relative rapidity is all the more remarkable in view of the number of obstacles that had to be overcome.

The Difficulties which had to be Surmounted

For the ideal of the ancient city, which so to speak was one with itself, inasmuch as the gods adored by the Greeks and Romans were the gods of the State, and in the Roman Empire the official religion had come to be summed up in the cult of the emperor, Christianity, without aiming at wholly destroying the former, substituted a new ideal which makes man, the citizen of the earthly city, a candidate

¹ But in point of fact, extensive tracts of the interior had escaped Christian preaching, for even as late as the sixth century, John of Ephesus, passing through Asia Minor, discovered numerous pagans as yet unconverted (John of Ephesus or of Asia, *Commentarii de beatis orientalibus et historiæ ecclesiasticæ fragmenta*, ed. Cureton, Oxford, 1853).

for a higher city, which St. Augustine will call the City of God. It taught the distinction between God and Cæsar, but no longer made any distinction between men, having no room for what the Gospel calls the "acceptance of persons," putting on the same plane rich and poor, freemen and slaves, Greeks or Romans and barbarians, and giving to all as a rule of life the practice of a moral system which none of the philosophies or religions of antiquity had equalled, however elevated some may have been, and one of inexorable purity. What a re-education must have been required in order to bring about its acceptance!

Doubtless a religious evolution, which had taken place parallel to the Christian development, and quite often against it, had prepared the way. The success of the oriental religions in the Roman world from the first to the third centuries proves that many were then seeking something which polytheism and Greco-Roman tradition could not give them.² These cults of the Phrygian *Magna Mater*, the Egyptian divinities, Syrian Baals or of Mithra had a great attraction, and at first, as in the case of Christianity, made the political authorities anxious. Hence the alternate attitudes of severity and toleration or favour towards Cybele or Isis or Mithra or the neo-Pythagorean religion. Hence also the reform of Claudius, who incorporated the Phrygian religion into the sacerdotal framework of the Roman state by curbing its exuberance, and hence also the prohibition of the little Pythagorean church, which was probably too independent.³ Hence again the adoption by the emperors themselves of the solar cults of Syria or Persia, constituting the monarch an incarnation or image of the supreme deity.

Opposition between Christianity and Eastern Religions Flourishing · in the Roman Empire

The various Eastern religions had a great advantage in their favour from the human standpoint, and one which constituted an important difference between them and Christianity: from the first to the third century they came into such close relations among themselves as to constitute almost a religious Syncretism, culminating in the Solar Monotheism officially professed by an emperor like

² Cf. Bk. I, Introduction, pp. 31 *et seq.*

³ Cf. the works of J. Carcopino mentioned in Bk. I, p. 31, n. 13; p. 35, n. 24 and n. 27.

Aurelian and later by Julian, or in the purified Monotheism of the adorers of the *Summus Deus*,⁴ as was perhaps Constantius Chlorus, and at the same time they came to terms with the traditional beliefs of Hellenism and of Rome by adaptations such as those often pointed out, finding for instance in Mithra the characteristics of Apollo, or offering for the adoration of its new disciples a Syrian Baal under the name of Saturn. Further, they in no way forbade their followers to participate in the official worship of the imperial divinity. It was quite otherwise with Christianity, which like Judaism taught the strictest Monotheism, and refused to take part in the religious adoration of the emperor and in the sacrifices offered to him as to a veritable deity. This refusal was tolerated by the Roman State in the case of the Jews, who were authorised to substitute for sacrifice a simple mark of respect, and for invocation of the divinity of the emperor a prayer for him, in virtue of the agreement made between their nation and Rome before the annexation.⁵ The Christians never enjoyed any like privilege.

There were other differences, which were not calculated to improve their position: although the oriental religions sometimes introduced into Roman circles some moral ideas superior to those prevalent there, Mithraism in particular presenting an ideal of purification and rectitude which has been rightly stressed, a preoccupation with moral ideas never held in them a place comparable to that which it has in the Christian religion. While they offered their followers the hope of salvation and immortality, these religions did so as an effect to be expected from the observance of rites which purified only symbolically, rather than as the fruit of a real personal reform. In other words, Christianity required much more from those who accepted it.

Humanly speaking, these other religions seem to have had all that was needed to enjoy a better fortune in the Roman Empire than the Christian religion, and were calculated to attract everyone and repulse none. One could adore Mithra or Serapis, or even the unnamed *Summus Deus*, who however was not the "jealous God" of Jews and Christians, without saying farewell to any human pleasure, and without denying Jupiter Capitolinus or ceasing to be devout to the emperor. How could the emperor, and the magistrates,

⁴ Cf. P. Batiffol, *La paix constantinienne*: Excursus B, pp. 188 et seq.; *Summus Deus, Le monothéisme dans le paganisme*.

⁵ Cf. Bk. I, Introduction, p. 33.

and Roman society in general be otherwise than favourably disposed towards these religions, which tended to coalesce into one, and at the same time to be integrated into the religious system of the Roman Empire?

Yet all this favour and benevolence did not bring about a lasting success for Syncretism. The progress of the religions of the East, and then of the Solar Monotheism which summed them up, lasted for three centuries. But from the day when the protection of the civil power was withdrawn from them after the conversion of Constantine, they declined so rapidly that in not much more than a century they had become little more than a memory.

The Attitude of Christians in Face of Opposition and Violence

The apparent paradox in the development of Christianity is that it took place, by contrast, in so little time, in spite of the opposition of authority, and this the authority of the Roman government, accompanied for a long time by an attitude of contempt and hatred on the part of the masses of the people who were often fanatically opposed to it. And the paradox is found still more in the attitude which Christians themselves maintained in face of this threefold hostility. They offered absolutely no opposition, not even the shadow of resistance other than passive, and certainly no armed resistance, for down to the end of the persecutions there was never the slightest revolt on the part of the Christians. Nor was there any legal resistance: such a thing could not even be conceived in the Empire, where there did not exist the slightest juridical means of opposing the imperial will. When from the third century Christians were really numerous, and when, in Tertullian's words, which were truer than when they had been written some fifty years previously, Christians were everywhere, in the prætoria, in the army, in the courts, and in all the professions,⁶ a violent resistance might not have been a simple act of despair. But it was never contemplated. The conduct of Christians during three centuries, in face of rigorous measures so often renewed, consisted simply in the application pure and simple of the principle of physical non-resistance to evil, and strict conformity with the spirit and even the letter of the Gospel concerning the acceptance of injuries. During two and a half cen-

⁶ [This is a *précis*. The actual quotation from Tertullian is given in Bk. III, p. 819.—Tr.]

turies they allowed themselves calmly to be decimated in the name of the laws, bending their necks to the sword, mounting the scaffolds, descending into the heat of the mines, evoking first the astonishment and then the admiration of the pagans, some of whom were converted by this limitless and calm heroism.

They certainly did not welcome this persecution. But they used against it one weapon only, that of spiritual defence, i.e. not only prayer, which they addressed to God, but also an effort of persuasion addressed to men, the deliberate methodical and scholarly effort of the apologists, who endeavoured to convince men's minds, and the spontaneous and daily efforts of the ordinary Christians, tending, almost without thinking, to win men's hearts by their example and their charity.

We cannot say that the first apologists, who dedicated their pleas for the Christian religion to the rulers themselves, had much success. Their works may have dissipated the prejudices or errors of educated people, and even have inspired some emperors—if indeed they read such works—with more favourable sentiments, and doubtless sometimes brought about or prepared the way for conversions. But these expositions, full of wise considerations, were not able to obtain for Christians the legal recognition of what we moderns call liberty of conscience and freedom of worship. Nevertheless, by its incessant progress Christianity multiplied its recruits, whom the civil authority at length wearied of persecuting, and the hostile masses in the end allowed themselves to be moved both by the deaths of the martyrs, whose constancy never failed, and by the spectacle of lives the virtues of which succeeded in conquering prejudices, ignorance, and misunderstandings.

§ 5. THE CAUSES OF THE CHRISTIAN VICTORY

It is not surprising that the paradox of a victory which seemed in itself so improbable, against powers so difficult to move, provided later apologists down to our own time with a first-rate argument in favour of the intrinsic superiority of Christianity. It would indeed be surprising if the contrary were the case. Such a history is well calculated to suggest, nay even to impose the idea of a providential plan, or, to use the philosophical terminology of to-day, a transcendent religion realising itself in the world.

But since this was brought about by human factors the action of which admits of analysis and examination, the determination of the causes, moral and social, which explain the triumph of Christianity in the field of history, seems called for to terminate our study.

External Causes

A first category of causes, which we may call external, is connected not with the nature itself of Christianity but with the conditions in which its propagation took place.

The Unification of the Ancient World by Rome

The state of the world at the commencement of our era, characterised by the political unification, under the sceptre of Rome, of the whole Mediterranean basin, which was at that time the center of civilisation, had already impressed the ancients. In spite of the survival of ethnical peculiarities, the vitality of which we know better to-day, an undeniable political unity, accompanied by a religious unity which was at least external, representing the extension to the whole Empire of the cult of Rome and the Augustus, had come into being with the Roman conquest and the establishment of the imperial regime at the very moment when the Church was to be born. This provided undeniable facilities for the diffusion of the Gospel message. Christians had already noted this in early times. The Spanish fifth century poet Prudentius wrote thus: "It was God who subjected all the peoples to the Romans in order to prepare the way for Christ."¹ But long before that, Origen had remarked² that the unity of the Empire had usefully co-operated in the remarkable success of Christian preaching. If, he said, instead of a single prince, there had been a number of kings, the various peoples would have remained strangers to one another, and the precept "Go and teach all nations. . ." would have been decidedly difficult to put into practice. The birth of Christ in the reign of Augustus coincided with the period which gathered, as it were, into one collection the greater part of the inhabitants of the world. Being itself a doctrine of peace, Christianity needed peace in order to triumph. "Already in the middle of the third century, Origen thus enunciates the apologetical thesis concerning the providential role of the Roman

¹ *Ad Symmachum*, ii, 582.

² *Contra Celsum*, II, xxx.

Empire, which in the two following centuries will have a more ample development and an increasing importance."³ This is certainly true.

Given other conditions and in different countries, hostile or at least strangers to one another in ideas, could the preaching of the Apostles and their successors have been carried on in the same way? We have already pointed out at the beginning of this history that Christianity spread more rapidly in the Roman Empire than in the neighbouring countries, and yet Christian propaganda began on the Eastern border of the Empire. From Judea it was not so far, as the crow flies, to Babylonia as to Greece, not so far to Persia as it was to Rome, not so far to Abyssinia as it was to Gaul or Spain. The Churches of Greece, Italy, Gaul and Spain nevertheless preceded those of Persia, Arabia or Abyssinia. The relative facility of communications certainly explains this difference: the sea is easier to cross than the desert. But geography does not explain everything: history plays its part as well. The vast network, with at least the externals of a uniform civilisation, which had gradually been formed by the Roman Empire, offered the best scope for the development of religious propaganda.

Possibly also this Greco-Roman world, possessing respected religious traditions but not a real religious faith, was more ready to accept a new religion than was a people like the Persians, who had higher and purer beliefs, more deeply rooted in men's minds, and in consequence were likely to offer a greater spiritual resistance to other teaching.

Moral and Religious Causes

But already we come here to the order of moral causes, and in this order we find the main reasons for the victory of Christianity. They may be reduced to one: Christianity brought an answer to the deepest aspirations of mankind which these had never before received.

Superiority of the Christian Ideal

These aspirations aim at an expansion of being which life refuses to the majority of mankind, by reason of the precariousness of their

³ P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne*, p. 150. He refers us to texts indicated by Fuchs, *Neue philologischen Untersuchungen*, herausgeg. von Werner Jaeger, Heft 3. *Augustin und der antike Friedensgedanke*, Berlin, 1926, p. 162.

material situation or of the trials they undergo, and which even the most fortunate can realise only imperfectly, inasmuch as there is always something more to desire beyond what one already has, and because even if we manage to acquire more, it all has to come to an end. In other words, we aspire to a life which is eternal and, as it were, divine, and this aspiration Christianity satisfies by its promise of union with God in a love without end, thanks to the Redemption which Christ has brought about.

Certainly, the other religions which arose in the East, those of the mysteries of Mithra, the *Magna Mater*, Isis and the Baals, had also claimed to give a similar message of salvation and immortality. But the differences between them and Christianity are manifest. We have already mentioned them.⁴ The accomplishment of their promises was conditioned by the knowledge of their mysteries and the practice of their rites; it all began with an initiation, linked doubtless with a purification, but this was external rather than internal. However essential its own rites are in the Christian religion, they are intimately bound up with the idea of charity, that is the fatherly love of God for man, and man's filial love for God, and the fraternal love of men for each other as children of God, and the rigorous requirement of a moral virtue which is simply the application of this charity to all domains. Neither Mithraism, the most elevated of the oriental religions which gained numerous converts in the Roman world, nor the later Syncretism, nor the Monotheism of the worshippers of the *Summus Deus*, preached anywhere the equivalent of the words of St. Paul concerning the charity which must accompany all things, and without which nothing is of any value.

Apparently many realised that this was something really new, and were struck by it. It explained the superhuman courage of Christians, and their supreme calm in presence of death, which was so disconcerting, sometimes so irritating, but which little by little compelled admiration and won sympathy not only for those who gave such extraordinary examples, but also for the doctrine they believed and taught. The apologetics of martyrdom, "*semen est sanguis christianorum*," in Tertullian's words,⁵ owed its effectiveness not only to its appeal to the emotions, but also to the learning of a long and important lesson.

⁴ Cf. *supra*, pp. 1222-1225.

⁵ *Apologeticum*, i, 13.

The apologetic of charity accompanied it. How many souls were moved, and led to meditate before the love shown by Christians not only for their brethren but for all men as, following a persecution which had decimated their ranks, the survivors spent themselves in the service of a whole city on the occasion of an outbreak of plague or after an earthquake! ⁶

Lastly, there were in pagan Society in Rome and elsewhere some who were disgusted with the fables and the moral mediocrity of the old Greco-Roman polytheism, or repelled by the inhuman passivity of Stoicism, whose spiritual needs could not be satisfied by the myths of the oriental religions, and whose thirst for God could not be quenched by the worship of the *Summus Deus*. These found what they lacked in the teaching of the Gospel, the Apostles, and the early Fathers of the Church. These Christian doctrines were more calculated to capture men's souls without forcing them than was Stoicism, and they revealed a God closer to man than the one presented by a cold Deism, and this God who had become Man was not at all a mythical being like Attis, Osiris or Mithra, deities whom their legends represent as having been more or less mixed up with humanity, but who never really belonged to human history, whereas Jesus Christ really lived among men and died for them. Thus Christianity spoke to men's hearts in a way no other doctrine had ever done.

The Universal Character of the Christian Religion

Moreover, Christianity spoke to the hearts of all men. This gives us a last trait in which the Christian religion is superior to all others: its universal character. Here moral and social factors combine, for the appeal is to all, great and small, rich and poor, educated and simple, and all in answering the appeal find their happiness.

The ancient cults had not formally excluded any particular category of worshippers, but the official religions of Greece and Rome were city-religions, and those who counted for little in a city, or counted hardly at all, as slaves, received small attention, and felt themselves more or less outsiders in the temples. They could take

⁶ As happened, for instance, on the occasion of the plague which followed the Decian persecution (cf. Pontius, *Vita Cypriani*, ix-x; St. Cyprian, *De mortalitate*, xv-xvi; *Ad Demetrianum*, x, xvi; Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, VII, xxii, 7-9), or that which ravaged the states of Maximin Daia (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, IX, viii, 13-14).

refuge in secondary cults, those of the domestic *lares*, the divinities of waters and woods, etc., but in doing so would they not be confessing their inferiority? The oriental religions were certainly more open: they might even be called universal, for a slave there rubbed shoulders with his master, and no regard was had for social rank. But very soon these religions came to an agreement with the official cults, were to some extent fused with them, and ultimately participated in the State religion. How could the prejudices of an aristocratic society such as that of the Roman Empire fail to make their influence felt in this matter? How could the humble feel quite as much at home in a sanctuary where the Mithraic "pater" might be also the Roman "pontifex," as in a Christian Church?

It is hardly necessary to repeat that Christianity had long announced itself to be the religion of the humble. The ironical remarks of Celsus on this matter⁷ find an echo without any hesitation or reserve in declarations by Tertullian or Origen, as also later on in those of St. Jerome, and the popular character of the majority of the Christian inscriptions in Rome, for instance, leaves no room for doubt as to the prominent part played by humble folk in the Church. But we must always bear in mind that there never was any exclusive attitude in this matter, and that this religion of the simple and poor, who found in it what they could not find anywhere else, never ceased in the course of the two and a half centuries during which it was taking possession of the Roman world, to draw to it in ever increasing numbers the representatives of the social, intellectual and moral *élite* of this world. And if, in fine, in order to try to estimate the strength of the forces which Christianity had succeeded in making its own when the Roman State gave up the fight and left it a field free for its final conquest, we are asked whether it gained more in proportion from among the *élite* or among the masses, we should probably have to make distinctions which would once more show its power of adaptation to the various states of mind of those seeking religious satisfaction, and the variety of spiritual goods it could put before them.

The Cult of the Saints

In the cities of some importance, where mental life was, not indeed deeper, but often more alert, and where men were more ready

⁷ Cf. *supra*, p. 1215.

to receive the new currents of ideas, and were less slaves of their habits, Christianity doubtless made fairly rapid progress among the masses. If these gave rise to manifestations of great hostility and of fanaticism, they also produced great movements of conversion.

In the smaller towns and the country parts, in which people were naturally more attached to local customs, there was certainly greater resistance, or at any rate the opposition of a stronger inertia, and possibly this was finally vanquished only through one of the elements of the religious life which, without in any way modifying the intransigence of Christian Monotheism, attenuated, as we might say, that which its apparent severity might make difficult to accept in the case of relatively primitive minds accustomed to all the religious varieties of polytheism. The cultus of the saints, which began with that of the martyrs, provided them with a satisfaction which they instinctively sought, and carried on the idea of a populous heaven such as they loved, and an earth in which many localities were as before consecrated by the memory of holy presences. The tombs of the martyrs and confessors took the place of the sanctuaries of local divinities, the cultus of which was sometimes very difficult to eradicate from the inhabitants of the country parts, the *pagani*,⁸ from whom paganism takes its name, and it would probably have been still more difficult if the cultus of new heavenly protectors, who were likewise immediately connected with particular places, had not been substituted for it. By the cultus of the martyrs, which was destined to have so great an expansion following the peace of the Church, after it had spontaneously and silently developed in the midst of Christian communities during the centuries of persecution, and to which would be added later on the cultus of other saints, "Christianity, a universal religion, continued to a certain extent the local religions,"⁹ which could hardly disap-

⁸ On the process which gave rise to the religious significance of the word *Paganus* (whence comes our own word "pagan"), shown either by deriving it from its primitive sense of "peasant," or from its secondary meaning of "civil" as opposed to "military," inasmuch as a non-Christian was not enrolled in the "militia Christi," cf. J. Zeiller, *Paganus: Etude de terminologie historique*, in *Collectanea Friburgensia*, New series, Fasc. xvii, Paris, and Fribourg in Switzerland, 1917. This study concludes that, contrary to the opinion maintained by Zahn (*Paganus*, in *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, Vol. X, 1899, pp. 18 et seq.), it was indeed from the original meaning of "paganus" as "peasant," and not from the later sense of "civil" that the religious meaning of the word arose.

⁹ A. Dufourcq, *Comment, dans l'Empire romain, les foules ont-elles passé des religions locales à la religion universelle, le christianisme?*, in *Revue d'Histoire*

pear completely at once. Thanks to the witnesses to Christ, and by a providential economy, the repugnance or hesitation which people whose ideas were still somewhat rudimentary might have had in regard to the doctrine of Christ gradually disappeared.

Christianity, which provided an answer to the highest aspirations of souls eager to find a truly divine God, adapted itself in this way to the instinctive human desire to find a religion near to mankind, and this in two ways. First and foremost, it did so by its doctrine of the Incarnate God, who really became a man among men, but it also did so by this practice of the cult of the saints which, by introducing between man and God a chain of intercessors and friends, seemed to shorten the distance and bring about the union between earth and heaven. To all men, whether the most particular or the simplest, the Church offered a habitation both large enough and homely enough to unite them all together in one fraternal society. Less than three centuries after its foundation by Christ, and after many vicissitudes, which were an almost perpetual proof of its force of resistance and its power of expansion, this habitation was already well filled, and even so the growth of the Christian people showed no signs of slackening.

et de Littérature religieuses, Vol. IV, 1899, pp. 239 *et seq.* Separate edition under the title: *La christianisation des foules*.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES OF POPES AND EMPERORS

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Alexander Severus	222-235		Urban	221-230	
			Pontian	230-235	
			Anteros	235-236	
			Fabian	236-250	
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Decius	249-251		Cornelius	251-253	
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Valerian	253-260		Lucius	253-254	
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			Sixtus II	257-258	
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(with Maximian					
Hercules from 285)					
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